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Syncretism: a study of Toshodai-ji Wayo architectural and cultural elements

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Syncretism: A study of Toshodai-ji Wayo architectural and cultural elements

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the last century there has been a great deal of speculation regarding the origins and development of cultural material from the Japanese people. There is significant evidence that bronze and iron materials from continental influence, such as Korea and China, made its way to Japan as early as 300 B.C.E. Additional cultural ideologies, like Buddhism, also diffused rapidly throughout Asia.

Chinese Buddhism affected Japanese culture significantly. The route for early Buddhist envoys, who reached the Japanese island from China, runs from the Changjiang Valley in China down the Korean peninsula, and across the Sea of Japan. The Japanese point of entry most likely occurred at Fukuoka and Saga prefecture in northern Kyushu Japan (Figure 1).[1] The southern Korean peninsula is the closest point of contact between the two continents. Studies estimate, that through the agricultural period, 1.5 million immigrants might have entered Japan through this region over a period of time creating "layers of migration."[2] As time progressed, Buddhist monks traveled this route, spreading Buddhist education to the Japanese people. The Japanese also made their way to China, while collecting innovative ideas and technologies. Early Chinese, Korean, and Japanese historical documents note several emissaries were sent to China during a 200-year period in the late Yamato era (552-710 C.E.).[3]

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[1] Imamura, Keiji (1996). Prehistoric Japan: New Perspectives on Insular East Asia. (pp. 131, 155-56). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
[2] Pearson, R.J. (E.D.). Windows on the Japanese Past: Studies in Archeology and Prehistory. (pp. 81-83). Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
[3] Tyler-Hitchcock, Susan and Esposito, John L. Geography of Religion: Where God Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk. (pp. 156-61). National Geographic, Washington, D.C.

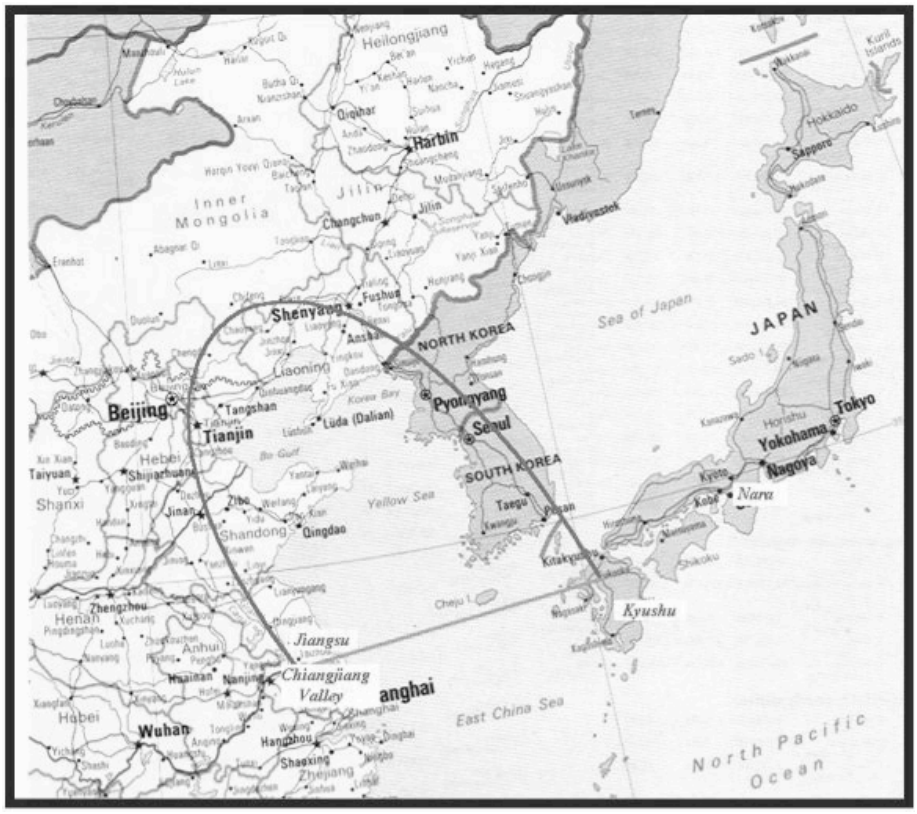

Figure 1. Early Routes to Japan

During China's first dynasties, Korea's tribal nation struggled in an attempt to establish its own kingdoms. Concurrently, Japan was experiencing a prolonged hunting and gathering period. The differentiation of cultural development among these three groups created an interesting effect for the Japanese islands. China's advancements in the arts, agricultural tools, rice cultivation, and iron casting techniques appeared collectively on the Japanese island of Kyushu.[4]

[4] Imamura, Keiji (1996). Prehistoric Japan: New Perspectives on Insular East Asia. (pp. 167-77). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

As early as 552 C.E., the Korean kingdom of Paekche sent a Buddhist image and sutras to the Japanese court. The impact of this new Buddhist philosophy on Japanese culture was extensive, affecting all facets of culture. Buddhism served as a powerful unifying force for the region, and became the foundation for the rise of Japanese civilization.[5] By the Classic Era in Japan (552-1156 C.E.), the aristocratic court became significantly more refined with numerous court members able to read and write Chinese. Japanese messengers would stay for years in China, returning to convey new ideas of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, along with remarkable details of Chinese culture and sophistication. These Buddhist political and religious ideas were not accessible to, nor adopted readily by the general public and became a distinctive feature of high court life.[6]

Buddhist temples, like Toshodai-ji, were created by the high court as monuments of religious patronage.[7] These temples became symbols of Japanese social leadership. Several provincial temples with images dedicated to Buddhist, deities, such as Sakyamuni, Vairochana, Yakushi, and Kannon, were built by emperors with the intention to instill national confidence, unity, and peace.

In Nara, an ancient capital of Japan (710-794 C.E.), architecture was heavily influenced by Chinese T'ang architectural style. Construction was characterized by ornamentation.[8] These essentials of style and refinement reached Japan through the efforts of traveling Chinese Buddhist monks.

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[5] Shirokuar, Conrad. (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (pp. 30-31). Forth Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
[6] Brown Heinz, Carolyn (1999). Asian Cultural Traditions. (pp. 300-301). Waveland Press, Inc. Prospect Heights, Illinois.
[7] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (pp. 173-77). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc. New Jersey.
[8] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (pp. 173-77). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc. New Jersey.

Integration and innovation of traditions from China, Korea, and Japan, a concept called syncretism, changed the evolution of Japanese culture, and, more specifically, the structure and design of temples in the region. As a result, a new form of architecture called Wayo was created. Thus, an examination of the culture, religion, arts, and architectural exchange that occurred between China, Korea and Japan warrants additional investigation. This is especially the case, as related to Buddhist philosophy and its impact on architecture between 500 and 700 A.D. during the Nara time period in Japan.

The following research project will focus on the introduction of Buddhism to China, Korea, and Japan, and its impact of culture and architectural design. Furthermore, it will discuss how indigenous elements blended with forms of Buddhism, as it traveled through each region. The Buddhist influences on architecture from each area will be briefly discussed, along with similarities in convention, design, and construction. In addition, the general characteristics of the Toshodai-ji Buddhist Complex of Nara, Japan will be explored. Specific details on the Kondo Hall at Toshodai-ji will include location, dimensions, connected structures, materials and techniques of production, symbolism, instrumentality, patronage, inscriptions, and architectural representation. This paper will also present in detail the figurative imagery of the Toshodai-ji Kondo, which consists of the Vairochana Buddha and its two flanking figures—Thousand Armed Kannon Senju and the Buddha Yakushi.

In summary, syncretism, the blending of cultures, that occurs when two independent and distinct cultural ideologies are exposed to one another will be explored. Japanese and Chinese Buddhist ideas that resulted in developments, such as Wayo, will be presented as evidence of syncretism in this region of the world and particular time period.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the cultural, political, religious, and architectural exchange that occurred between China, Korea, and Japan during the Nara era between the dates of 500 and 700 C.E. In addition, the study will examine the general principals of Buddhism, as well as its introduction into East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan). Furthermore, this manuscript will explore how syncretism and Buddhism resulted in a new and innovative tradition of Japanese architecture called Wayo.

Wayo architecture and its evolution in Japanese temple construction, particularly in the design of the Toshodai-ji Buddhist Complex, will demonstrate the direct impact of Chinese Buddhist teachings and philosophy on indigenous Japanese art. As such, this study will investigate the general characteristics of a Japanese Toshodai-ji Buddhist Complex and identify specific details aforementioned such as: 1) location, 2) dimensions, 3) connected structures, 4) materials, 5) techniques of production, 6) symbolism, 7) instrumentality, 8) patronage, 9) inscriptions, and 10) architectural representation. The final portion of this paper will be dedicated to understanding the concept of syncretism and how it applies to the unique and distinct design and layout of the Toshodai-ji structure.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant from a number of important perspectives. First, and perhaps most important, is that when cultures come in contact with one another, they not only share and adopt distinct concepts and customs, but an assimilation and synthesis of the distinct cultures occur—syncretism. This often results in significant invention and innovations in cultural materials. More specifically, the exchange of Buddhist principals between China

and Japan via Korea resulted in the application of a new architectural style significantly influencing Japanese culture. Not only was the religious architecture of Japan altered, but more importantly, ideas and concepts, as reflected in cultural practices, were also influenced. In particular, this study will demonstrate how these innovations led to not only the creation of new cultural and artistic practices, but shared activities between the countries.

Delimitations of the Study

This study has been delimited in the following ways:

1. Cultural exchange between China and Japan via Korea;
2. Review of the application of Wayo Architecture in the Toshodai-ji Buddhist Complex; and
3. Influences of Buddhist teachings, philosophy, and art during the Nara Era.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the following:

1. Access to primary resources, due to geographic, historical, linguistic, and cultural constraints;
2. The ability of the researcher to accurately interpret and reflect secondary sources of information; and
3. Access to relevant secondary sources within the timeframe established to implement the research project.

Definitions

The following terms are defined to provide the reader a common base of understanding.

Acculturation: Groups having different cultures come into contact with one another, which results in changes in cultural patterns.[9]

Architecture: The art of designing and constructing buildings. The term often includes a style or fashion of building, especially one that is typical of a period of history or a particular place.[10]

Bodhisattvas: In Mahayana Buddhism, one who has attained enlightenment, but renounces Nirvana for the sake of helping all sentient beings in their journey to liberation from suffering.[11] One who stays connected with the earth to help free all sentient beings from their suffering in samsara (the world of birth and death).

Buddhism: Buddhism is an eastern tradition established on the teachings of Sidhartha Guatama who lived from 563 to 483 B.C. After traveling as ascetic for many years, and contemplating the foundation of human suffering (dhukka), Sidhartha reached enlightenment. He decided that restrictive earthly attachments remained the primary source of suffering. Followers adhere to the three jewels—the dharma, sangha and Buddha. [12]

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[9] Haviland, William (1999). Cultural Anthropology: Ninth Edition. (pp. 454-456). Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Fort Worth.
[10] (http://encartadictionary/msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861586657).
[11] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Religions: Second Edition. (pp. 401, 128-129). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.
[12] Langley, Myrtle. (1993). World Religions: A Guide to the Faiths that Shape the World. (pp. 30-35). Lion Publishing, Batavia, Illinois.

Buddhist Imagery: Representation of Buddhist ideals, traditions and spiritual qualities made physical and/or characterized through symbols or images. Often ritualized in devotional activities, early Buddhist imagery include stupas, bohdi tree, jakata tales, lotus flowers, footprints, dharma wheel and mudras, etc.[13]

China: The largest country in eastern Asia, China was named zhongguo, or "middle kingdom." China initially saw itself as the geographic center of the universe, from which all other civilizations radiated. Many early Chinese cultural ideas diffused throughout Asia. Lasting traditions from this region include Taoism and Confucianism, both developed in this region.[14]

Confucianism: Ancient tradition of China, based on the early teachings of Kung Fu Zi. It includes a social hierarchy based on filial piety, a patriarchal order, along with the importance of ancestry. His teachings were scripted years later in a collection of Analects.[15]

Culture: "A shared way of life that includes material products, values, beliefs, and norms transmitted within a particular society from generation to generation." Cultural behaviors vary within specific societies, as well as from region to region. Culture gives cues on how to interpret social actions within a particular cultural framework or context. Culture is both adaptive and integrative.[16]

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[13] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (pp. 13-14). Thames & Hudson, London.
[14] Shirokuar, Conrad and Brown, Miranda (2006). A Brief History of Chinese Civilization. (pp. 33, 96). Wadsworth & Thompson, Belmont, CA.
[15] Langley, Myrtle (1993). World Religions: A Guide to Faiths that Shape the World. (pp. 37-38). Lion Publishing, Batavia, Illinois.
[16] Bates, Daniel G. (1998). Human Adaptive Strategies: Ecology, Culture and Politics. (pp. 8-9). Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

Four Heavenly Kings: The Four Guardian Kings, also known as Ninwang (Chinese), Inwang (Korean) and Ni-O (Japanese), are depicted as compassionate kings who guard a temple at its four cardinal points. They are thought to . . . "represent the two opposing forces of the Universe." These are gate guardians who safeguard Buddha's Universe.[17]

Ganjin: T'ang Chinese Buddhist Monk from the Buddhist Ritsu or "rules temples" sect, who was commissioned by the Japanese Emperor Yomei in 733 C.E. to reorganize Buddhist education. For his continued dedication to Japan, in 759 C.E., he was endowed an imperial land grant, and the Toshodai-ji Temple was built in his honor.[18]

Japan: A group of islands in East Asia in the North Pacific Ocean, off the northeast coast of mainland Asia, named Nihon/Nippon or "source of the sun." Japanese inhabitants are thought to have originated from Ameratsu, the sun goddess. The four main islands of Japan are Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku. While Japan has strong indigenous characteristics, early Japanese culture was also significantly influenced by the transmission of Chinese civilization.[19]

Kami: From the Japanese folk tradition Shintoism. Kami are believed to be divine spirits that dwell in all places, things, animals or people. Translated as "god" or spirit, it is thought of as a single essence of invisible spirits manifesting in multiple places, and that which invokes "wonder and awe in us."[20]

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[17] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 65). Thames & Hudson, London.
[18] Kidder, Edward J. (1964). Japanese Temples: Sculpture, Paintings, Gardens and Architecture. (pp. 51-56). Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, Tokyo.
[19] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (pp. 19-41). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
[20] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Religions: Second Edition. (pp. 169-170). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.

Kannon: Avalokitesvara known as Guanyin (China), Kannon (Japan), and Kwanum (Korea) was born from a ray of light and is the feminine being of compassion, goddess of mercy, and protector of the world. In China, Korea, and Japan, she is. . . "not only seen as a compassionate savior, but also as a mother figure and a bestower of children."[21] She is often depicted holding in her thousand arms various gifts and items to lead people to enlightenment. [22]

Kondo or Golden Hall: The main hall at Toshodai-ji and is thought to be one of the best examples of ancient Japanese Wayo architecture. The kondo housed the sacred images to which prayers were offered from outside the building. The kondo and pagoda typically form the sacred center of a temple.[23]

Korea: In East Asia, a country that extends south from northeastern China and lies on a peninsula. North Korea covers the northern portion of the peninsula and South Korea the southern portion. To date, the most probable route of transmission of Chinese culture to Japan was through the Korean Peninsula.[24]

Nara Era: During the Nara period in Japan, 710-784 C.E., the adoption of many Chinese ideals, institutions, and government policies occurred. These continental influences included the Taiho Code, Buddhism, temple architecture, and related arts.[25]

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[21] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 43). Thames & Hudson, London.
[22] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 43). Thames & Hudson, London.
[23] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (pp. 74-75). Weatherhill, New York.
[24] Imamura Keiji (1996). Prehistoric Japan: New Perspectives on Insular East Asia. (pp. 131, 155-56). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
[25] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (pp. 32-41). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Pagoda: Chinese Buddhist multistoried polygonal temple with successfully diminishing roofs. The Pagoda was the Chinese representation of an Indian stupa.[26]

Shintoism: The indigenous religion of Japan, associated with the afterlife, ancestors, and nature. Honors the essence of the Kami, or those divine spirits, which dwell in all things.[27]

Syncretism: During acculturation, the blending of indigenous and foreign traits to form a new system.[28] When Chinese and Japanese Buddhist elements integrated, syncretism occurred, creating new religious forms of philosophy, politics, technology, and arts.

Toshodai-ji: Buddhist temple built during the Nara period in honor of the Chinese Buddhist monk Gaijin. The temple serves as a prototype for the innovative Japanese Wayo architectural movement.[29]

Vairochana: The Shingon School, an esoteric Buddha sect, taught that the major Japanese kami were manifestations of heavenly continental Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. As a result, the sun goddess Amaterasu became a form of Vairochana, or "Great Shining One" or the "Great Sun Buddha." All other Buddhas are thought to be emanations of Vairochana. In the Kondo Imagery Hall of the Toshodai-ji Complex, Buddha Birushana (Vairochana) is one of several prominent images.[30]

Wayo Architecture: Architectural innovation that occurred during the Nara. The Wayo temple architecture was the result of a blending or merging of the native artistic Japanese style of temple building and Chinese Buddhist temple architecture. [31]

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[26] Smith-Lucie Edward (1984). Dictionary of Art Terms. (p. 139). Thames & Hudson, New York.
[27] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Relations: Second Edition. (pp. 169-70). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.
[28] Haviland, William (1999). Anthropology: 9th Edition. (p. 461). Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Fort Worth.
[29] Ooka, Minuro (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (pp. 75-75). Weatherhill, New York.
[30] Kidder, E.J. (1981). The Art of Japan. (p. 105). Century Publishing Co. Ltd., London.
[31] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (pp. 74-75). Weatherhill, New York.

Yakushi: The medicine Bodhisattva, or Yakushi, "Healing Teacher," is known as four cardinal directions. This deity was also known as Yaoshi (Chinese), and Yaksa (Korea). Across Asia this deity was depicted as commanding the 12 warriors. Yakushi made 12 vows to not heal only the spiritual aspects, but the physical suffering of humanity. [32]

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into six (6) independent chapters. Chapter 1 is an "Introduction" to the study and includes the following: 1) purpose of the study, 2) significance of the study, 3) study limitations, 4) study delimitations, 5) definition of terms, and 6) organization of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on the "Fundamentals and General Principles of Buddhism." Chapter 3 highlights the "Introduction of Buddhism to East Asia." Chapter 4 presents, "Temple Origins." Chapter 5 explores the "Toshodai-ji Buddhist Complex" in detail. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the topic of "Specific Imagery of Kondo Hall." Chapter 7 discusses "Dry Lacquer Techniques." Chapter 8, entitled "Syncretism: Summary and Analysis," brings together the various findings and elements of the previous chapters. Each of the above-mentioned chapters, following Chapter 1, are organized to include an introduction, explanatory body with sub sections, followed by summary statements.

[32] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 31). Thames & Hudson, London.

CHAPTER 2: FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM

Introduction

Buddhism is practiced in a number of countries throughout the world. There are countless and varied sects that have advanced from the earlier and original branches established two thousand years ago. The basic concepts still remain, however, and include peace, compassion, mindful thinking, impermanence, and the cessation of suffering. In contemporary society, the fourteenth Dai Lai Lama advocates reverence for all living things, and also strives for environmental rights, human rights issues, and peaceful reasoning in resolving international disputes.[33] All Buddhist schools, while distinct in expression, still believe in a set of general principles established by its founder, Siddhartha Gautama.[34] However, since its inception, the interpretation and expansion of the Buddhist philosophy, has been open and flexible.

This chapter will discuss the general precepts of Buddhism. In addition, differentiation in the interpretation of these fundamentals will be presented through the discussion of three primary Buddhist sects—Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Chapter 2 assists the reader by laying the foundation for understanding the importance of Buddhist temple construction in Japan, specifically the Toshodai-ji Temple Complex, the intended focus of this study.

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[33] Tyler-Hitchcock, Susan and Esposito, John L. Geography of Religion: Where God Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk. (p. 188). National Geographic, Washington, D.C.

[34] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (pp. 1-5). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

Sidhartha Gautama: General Principles of Buddhism

Born to a noble Indic Ksatriya family in 563 B.C., Sidhartha ventured from his sheltered palace as a young man to understand the pain and suffering of the world. Determined, he abandoned his family to become a wandering aesthetic. Six years of searching led Sidhartha to a Bhodi Tree by the River Gaya, where, on the verge of starvation, he experienced a spiritual awakening called the Great Enlightenment. During this spiritual awakening, the prince recognized desire and craving as the cause of all human suffering. He suggested that by adhering to a course of moderation, and existence between the self indulgent and self denial called the "middle way," one could relieve desire and suffering.[35]

At his sermon at Deer Park in Benares, Buddha suggested a "middle way" could be accomplished through the consideration of a systematic discourse (dharma). By establishing this dharma, he is said to have set his Wheel of Law in motion. Buddha's dharma included three analytical steps to instruct human in the art of healing human suffering. In his first step, Buddha sought to understand the five phenomena (khanda) that comprised the "I" of the human soul. Buddha stated that the khanda had three facets that were immutable. These aspects included impermanence (anicca), suffering (dhukka), and the not-self (anatta). Buddha also segregated the khanda into five features. These included the rupa (human form), vendana (feelings), sanna (cognition), sakhara (initiation of action), and the vinnana (discriminative behavior).[36]

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[35] Langley, Myrtle (1993). World Religions: A Guide to the Faiths that Shape the World. (pp. 38-39). Lion Publishing, Batavia, Illinois.

[36] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices. (pp. 50-53). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

The second key element Buddha developed was the Four Noble Truths. These truths stated: 1) all mortal existence is characterized by suffering (dhukka); 2) suffering arises from craving or desire; 3) to stop desire means to stop suffering; and 4) the stopping of suffering comes from following the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path, also a third key element established by Buddha, provided instructional steps of morality and discipline. This path taught that by establishing the following eight characteristics—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration and right contemplation or ecstasy—karmic suffering could be eliminated, rebirth (samsara) would end and nirvana could finally be reached.[37]

Buddha's depiction of nirvana was different than Hindu. While maintaining the existence of the samsara cosmology with its continual cycles of death and rebirth, as well as the value of karma, Buddha established nirvana not as paradise, but as the cessation of conditional phenomena. Sutra passages describe nirvana as level of awareness which is infinite and available from all directions. In nirvana, physical and earthly qualities have no bearing.[38]

Buddha advocated a monastic discipline (vinaya) designed to shape the model community. The sangha that made up the ideal community consisted of ordained monks (bhikshus), and eventually nuns (bhikshunis), who strived to emulate Buddha's life of

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[37] Langley, Myrtle (1993). World Religions: A Guide to the Faiths that Shape the World. (p. 31). Lion Publishing, Batavia, Illinois.

[38] Harvey Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (pp. 61-64). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

poverty and spiritual dedication. Members devoted themselves to studying the dharma. Fully ordained monks observed 227 precepts. They also shaved their heads, dressed in simple saffron robes, owned few earthly items, ate no solid foods after lunch, practiced celibacy, and depended upon other people for food. In return, they provided spiritual direction, recited blessings, and offered worldly advice and education.[39] All monks and nuns sought to become arhats, a word meaning "worthy." An arhat was an enlightened Buddhist saint, who has achieved the basic experience and has been radically transformed by it. Arhats no longer create karmic results leading to rebirth and death, and when they die, they reach nirvana, Buddha's realm of ultimate truth.[40]

After the death of Gautama in 483 B.C.E., a strong divergence of his sangha began to occur. As a result, the triptaka (three jewels) was created. The triptaka established a standard formula for expressing faith and conviction. It contained the dharma (Buddhist law, or code of ethical conduct), the sangha (Buddhist followers known arhats, bhikshush, and bhikshunis) and the Buddha. At every Buddhist shrine and meeting, the three jewels are invoked three times by chanting the following Pali formula: To the Buddha for refuge I go (Buddham saranam gaccami), To the dharma for refuge I go (Dhammam saranam gaccami), and To the sagha for refuge I go (sangham saranam gaccami).[41]

Theravada Buddhism

Theravada called the "way of the elders" (Sthaviras), "or the lesser vehicles" is prominently practiced in southern Asia and is dominant in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos,

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[39] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Religions: Second Edition. (p. 123). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.
[40] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (pp. 62-63). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.
[41] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Relations: Second Edition. (p. 123). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.

and Kampuchea. It is the earliest known form of Buddhism still surviving. Theravada Buddhist monks flourished around 240 B.C.E. in the Narmada Valley of Lanks. This Buddhism is known for its adherence to early scriptures. After the death of Buddha, the first Buddhist council was held at Rajagra with the intention of establishing Buddha's words into tradition. Five hundred arhats gathered to provide responses to questions about the vinaya and dharma. These answers were amassed to create the first two of the three oral traditions called triptaka or baskets. The first of these baskets was called the Vinaya Pitaka and explained Buddha's codes of discipline. The second basket was called the Sutra Pitaka and contained instructions on how the Sangha was to be governed. Some sects added a third pitaka, Abhidharma Pitaka, composed of philosophical interpretations of sutras. These canons were organized, memorized and orally passed down through the Pali language for centuries until finally written down. The doctrines emphasized the importance of Buddha as a historical figure, the virtues of monastic life and the authority of the Tripitaka.[42]

Theravada Buddhists also honor later commentaries, like the hundreds of Jakata Tales. Theravada Buddhism placed emphasis on the monastic life of renunciation, self discipline, mindfulness and meditation as a means of attaining nirvana.[43] Theravada Buddhists contemplated suffering in one's life and tried to achieve individual liberation through ardent practices. In Theravada, Buddha is a historical figure who no longer exists, but left his dharma as a guide. Two distinct paths developed between the monks and laity in Theravada

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[42] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (pp. 75-77). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

[43] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (pp. 15, 78, 89). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

Buddhism. The path for monks was based on the progression towards morality, concentration, and wisdom leading to nirvana. In contrast, laity was expected to give alms, observe the three refuges and five precepts, and give some concentration to achievement of tranquility. In Theravada Buddhism, lay people were not expected to know much about enlightenment, and few of them try to gain enlightenment.

Within the Theravada there were a number of ways to worship. The veneration of relics in stupas thought to be from Buddha was a widespread Theravadan practice. Relics such as bone chips or possessions from Buddha and/or fragmentary pieces of scripture were placed within the stupa. Worship at the stupa to accumulate merit was accomplished by holding hands in anjali mudra, circumambulating the stupa (pradakshina), singing, bringing gifts, pressing squares of god onto leaf images, lighting incense, and candles or offering flowers or hanging garlands.[44]

Theravada worship is symbolic in nature. Buddhism was seen as non-theistic. And, Theravadan orthodoxy taught the Buddha no longer existed as an individual, having entered Nirvana. It is considered a religion of self-effort, without reference to gods. However, physical images give worshippers a sense of guidance and protectiveness. As a result, anionic symbols, such as lotus blossoms, the wheel of dharma, footprints, thrones, animals, trees, and lush vegetation were used to represent the Buddha during this time period.[45]

Mahayana Buddhism

Disagreement over the Abhidharma led to a Third Buddhist council sponsored by King Asoka around the first century C.E. As a result, two new factions of Buddhism developed:

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[44] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Religions: Second Edition. (p. 127). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.
[45] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (pp. 13-14). Thames & Hudson, London.

The Vibhajyavadins and the Saravastivadins. The Saravastivadins cultivated the doctrine of paramita (perfections), which became the cornerstone of Mahayana Buddhism, also known as the "Greater Vehicle."[46] Mahayana Buddhism is currently dominant in Nepal, Tibet, Korea, China, Mongolia, and Japan.[47] While Theravada Buddhism continued to seek arhartship, Mahayana Buddhist sought to become Bodhisattvas. Mahayana Buddhist maintained they were bound to the earth by choice in order to direct others to enlightenment. In becoming Bodhisattvas, Mahayana followers tried to achieve three metaphysical aspects of the Buddha: 1) the essence of knowledge and compassion, 2) the body of bliss, and 3) the body of transformation, by which the Buddha becomes human to liberate humanity. In addition, six perfections were developed—generosity (dana), wisdom (prajna-paramita), patience (ksanti), vigor (vitya), meditation (dhyana), and morality (Sila).[48] Jakatas illustrates how, in his former lives, he fulfilled each of these perfections.

The followers of Mahayana tradition believed it was better to work towards the enlightenment of others before seeking enlightenment for one's self. A Mahayana Buddhist does not seek to become arhats, but rather Bodhisattvas. A Bodhisattva is a Buddha to be; someone who freely decided to remain in the cycle of rebirth in order to guide others to enlightenment.[49]

Mahayanists followed the triptaka, but added new sutras written in Sanskrit. They argued the sutras were initially hidden by Buddha, and arrived through meditative revelation,

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[46] Robinson, Richard H., and Johnson, Willard L. (1997). The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction. (pp. 30-68, 104-107, 110, 117-123). Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, CA.
[47] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (pp. 15-25). Thames & Hudson, London.
[48] Robinson, Richard H., and Johnson, Willard L. (1997). The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction. (pp. 82-89). Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, CA.
[49] Erricker, Clive (1995). Buddhism: New Edition. (p. 72). Contemporary Book, McGraw Hill, Illinois.

during a second turning of the wheel of dharma. The new sutras were different in style and tone but were defended as the "word of Buddha," as arrived through meditative visions and vivid dreams. Furthermore, a new perspective of Abhidarma emerged in the 2nd century C.E. Narajuna, a south Indian philosopher, expanded on the Theravada teachings of emptiness (sunyata), concluding that samsara and nirvana were also empty.[50] Anionic imagery of Buddha is evident in temples such as Toshodai-ji. The symbols mentioned above were both characteristics of artistic representatives of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

Vajrayana Buddhism

The Dharmagutptaka sect specialized in the art of sharahani or mantra (protective incantation) and gave rise to Tantrism or Vajrayana Buddhism around the 7th century. Mantras were used to contact the gods, cast spells, gain good harvest, health, or even to bewitch someone. With emphasis placed on repetition, mantras were written out thousands of times. Through the ritual practice of mantras and yoga, followers attempted to construct a "diamond body" for themselves that allowed them to physically sustain energies of higher states, and enabled them to pass onto nirvana at an accelerated rate.[51]

Tantric meditations began and ended with meditating on emptiness. Initiates then concentrated on deities who embodied various manifestations of energy in the universe. Tantras were divided into four categories—Action, Performance, Yoga and Unexcelled Yoga. Action and performance tantras were rituals used to gain merit, and to provoke

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[50] Fisher, Mary Pat (1994). Living Religions: Second Edition. (p. 127). Prentice Hall, Edgewood Cliffs, N.J.
[51] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (pp. 134-35). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

spontaneous reactions in the mind. Yoga tantras were used to awaken Mahavairochana, cosmic Buddha. Unexcelled yoga tantras taught sexual Deva yoga.

Three levels called yanas were also established. Hinayana, the first level, was a meditative quieting of the mind and detachment from worldly goods. Mahayana, the second level, included training in compassion. Vajrayana, the third level, used the energies of the body to transform the mind. Practices included levitation, clairvoyance, meditating continuously without sleep, and warming the body. Women played an important role in the development of Vajrayana Buddhism. Female deities, like Tara, are admitted into the Buddhist pantheon. Born from two tears shed by Avalokitsvara, Tara is described as graceful, attractive, approachable, and a compassionate deity (Vajrayana pantheon included female figures, and sensuality of the images).[52]

Summary

Acquiring a basic framework of Buddhism, particularly Mahayana Buddhism, will serve to illuminate how its philosophy influenced the arts and architecture in Japan. Buddhist traits were influential in creating new and innovative social, political, and artistic changes in Classical Japan. Theories of causality in Mahayana Buddhism support the idea these temples were built for the purpose of, and to be instrumental in, preventing natural calamities and war.

The pagoda arrived from China and was created from the Theravada stupa.[53] In addition, the concept of the Bodhissatvas in Mahayana Buddhism provided the stimulus for

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[52] Harvey, Peter (1990). An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices. (p. 183). Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y.

[53] Cole, Emily (2002). The Grammar of Architecture. (p. 60). Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

production and placement of imagery in the Kondo Hall of the Temple of Toshodai-ji. Additional ritual implements such as mandalas, and symbolic imagery, such as mudras, dharma wheels, lotus blossoms, scepters, swords, and flowing robes, along with temple details such as directional placement for offerings, meditations and devotions, were all motivated by Buddhist ideology. Having a general background in Buddhism will facilitate a more comprehensive and comparative analysis of Toshodai-ji.

CHAPTER 3: BUDDHIST TRANSMISSION TO EAST ASIA

Introduction

From India, philosophy quickly diffused throughout Asia to Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, and Indonesia. Furthermore, Buddhism diffused throughout Nepal, Tibet, Korea, China, Mongolia, and Japan. As the popularity of Buddhism began to decline in India, it spread rapidly throughout Asia in a period of about three hundred years, after the death of Buddha.[54]

Fa Hsien, the first of many Chinese travelers, was a scholar who set out to translate Buddhist sutras. During his 16-year journey across China, his vivid accounts helped spread its influence throughout the region. Fa Hsien's example was followed by numerous monks. The monks made pilgrimages across trading routes, sharing Buddhist traditions and legends through oral and written sutras, building architectural wonders, and crafting paintings and traditional sculptures.[55] By the first centuries, Buddhism had spread to China, Korea, and Japan. This chapter will specifically discuss the introduction of Buddhism to China, Korea, and Japan, along with examples of its direct impact on the arts and literature for those regions.

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[54] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (pp. 20-25). Thames & Hudson, London.
[55] Tyler-Hitchcock, Susan and Esposito, John L. Geography of Religion: Where God Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk. (pp. 157, 161). National Geographic, Washington, D.C.

Transmission of Buddhism to China

With commercial resources, Buddhism made its way along the silk route during the fourth and sixth centuries. In China, Buddhism reached its cultural and artistic pinnacle during the T'ang Dynasty.[56] Buddhism affected all aspects of continental culture, from politics to aesthetics such as literature, sculpture, painting, and architecture. Perceived as a great unifying force after the political upheaval of the Six Dynasties era, Buddhism proliferated the country with enormous success by offering spiritual opportunities that were accessible to all people instead of 'just rewards' to a limited Confucian aristocracy. Furthermore, for the Chinese, Buddhism provided a . . . "radically different way of conceiving life and death, humanity and the cosmos,"[57] As a result, Buddhism developed a great appeal and spread rapidly among the nobility, and eventually to the general masses of China, Korea, and Japan, over a period of one thousand years.[58]

While progressing through Asia, additional innovations occurred in the direction of the Buddhist philosophy. Innovative doctrines ." . .an extraordinary array of ideas and practices, ranging from monastic discipline to magic, the worship of statues and relics, and techniques of meditation and ecstasy evolved. . ."[59]

In China, along with the idea of salvation for all, a new branch of Mahayana Buddhism taught that reality was really void of space, and the foundation for all earthly "phenomena"

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[56] Scapari, Maurizio (2000). Ancient China. (p. 64). Barnes and Noble Publishing, Inc., New York.
[57] Buckley –Ebrey, Patricia (2003). Cambridge Illustrated History: China. (p. 95). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
[58] Buckley –Ebrey, Patricia (2003). Cambridge Illustrated History: China. (p. 99). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
[59] Buckley –Ebrey, Patricia (2003). Cambridge Illustrated History: China. (p. 96). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

was created out of this empty space. This branch of Buddhism gained great popularity throughout China. Mahayana Buddhism subscribed to the notion that Buddha led a pantheon of lesser deities known as Bodhisattvas. Many images and structures have been erected in Buddha's, as well as Bodhisattva's, honor throughout Asia. Chinese sects of Buddhism, such as those diffused throughout China, blended with traditional philosophies and systems, and eventually became influential in Japan by way of journeying monks. Two of the more substantial sects that rose were the Pure Land Sect, devoted to Amitabha, and the Tiantia Sect, devoted to a sacred mountain range in China.[60]

Buddhism had a significant impact on the art and culture throughout the entire region. Amazing Buddhist iconography, sculpture and architecture, works dedicated to Buddha and his Bodhisattvas arose in China. Temples and figures were fashioned from stone and pagodas, the East Asian version of the Indian stupa, were erected. Hundreds of caves on the route to Duhuang and called the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas, were ." . . filled with sculptured clay figures, frescoes, libraries or scrolls, manuscripts, and banners. . ."[61] The art of these early caves, while similar to that of the Indian stylization, were blended with distinct Chinese elements to create a new variation of Buddhist imagery that was of a certain ." . . facial proportion, with long nose, round chin, and conventionalized ears, and a flowing linearity design. . ."[62] This concept of syncretism extended over Asia, whereby indigenous, creative, and diverse concepts were absorbed and synthesized to advance eclectic and innovative designs and artistic convention.

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[60] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (pp. 82-83). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
[61] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (pp. 151-57). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc., N.J.
[62] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (p. 155). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc., N.J.

Early Chinese Buddhist architecture included conventional prototypes, such as the White Horse Temple (Bai ma si) in Luoyang, Henan Province. Architectural characteristics, which eventually spread to Korea and Japan, included a centralized axis and court, an oriented entrance gate, evenly spaced columns, overhanging hipped roofs, upturned eaves, tiled roofs, post and lintel construction, and clustered bracket systems. Specific structures, such as the golden hall and pagoda, developed in the Chinese monastic order and were introduced to Japan via Korea.

Emperor Ming from the Han Dynasty established the first known Buddhist temple in China. Like the latter temples of Japan, the White Horse Temple was built upon a central axis with several adjoining structures and halls to include a bell tower, Heavenly King Hall, Dafo Hall, Treasure Hall Receiving, and Directing Hall. A 13-story pagoda was added during the Jin Dynasty (1155-1234 C.E.), and two stone horses at the front gate during the Song Dynasty (960-1200 C.E.) of the White Horse Temple. Similar to the Toshodai-ji Temple Complex in Japan, the halls stored images of Shijia muni, Amituo, and the Medicine Buddha, Yaoshi.[63]

Chinese Buddhist style can be further subdivided into three creative styles—Archaic, Elongated, and Columnar.[64] Archaic was associated with the cave temples of Datong and the Colossal Buddha, and the Porch of Cave at Yungang from the Six Dynasty time period. The elongated style is associated with the cave temples at Longmen. The elongated style provides more linear progression, and the low relief statues are more refined, smoother and

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[63] Fu, X., Liu, X., Pan, G., Guo, D., Qiao, Y., & Sun, D. (2003). A History of Chinese Architecture: First Edition. (p. 53). Yale University Press., New Haven, C.T.
[64] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (p. 156). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc., N.J.

share ." . . repetitive rhythmic effect. This style is most associated with the attention to the statues drapery, emphasizing pleats and folds. . ."[65] The third style is most associated with the Xiangtangshan site and is marked by ." . . stately, full bodied, monumental sculptures on which bejeweled ornament is applied to the smooth surface of the columnar forms. . ."[66] The Bodhisattva carved in stone from Xiangtangshan typifies this style.

Through military expansion of the T'ang Dynasty, these prototypes of Buddhist temples, sacred sutras and texts, statues and ceremonial rituals, spread with great force to both Korea and Japan. Buddhism found such success in that. . . "it addressed itself to human suffering with a directness of doctrine, magic, medicine, music and ritual, even heavens and hells for those bewildered by the abstract quality of Nirvana,"[67]

Transmission of Buddhism to Korea

As it made its way across the Sea of Japan from the Changjiang Valley in China, the transmission of Buddhism and cultural material had a significant impact on the Korean peninsula. During the 4th century and the ear of the three kingdoms of Korea: Silla, Koguryo, and Paekche, Koreans began to model their political system, both in . . . "state and society"[68] after the T'ang Chinese prototype, heavily influenced by Buddhist doctrine. The Koreans created a new form of Buddhism distinct from that of the arriving Chinese Buddhism. Buddhism blended with the indigenous and shamanistic belief system of the Korean people with Chinese Buddhism, and created a form called Muism. In Muist Buddhism, mountain ranges became spiritual expanses, where Buddhist temples were

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[65] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (p. 161). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc., N.J.
[66] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (p. 161). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc., N.J.
[67] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Chinese Civilization. (p. 29). Wadsworth & Thompson, Belmont, CA.
[68] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (p. 163). Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc., N.J.

built. Through spirits of nature, such as those of the mountain, gained preference among the Korean Buddhist echelon of deities. The new form also maintained the basic Buddhist doctrine.[69]

The three kingdoms fell to the T'ang Dynasty and Silla empires in 668 C.E. Under Silla rule and the influence of Chinese Buddhism, the Silla kingdom managed to maintain peace for a hundred years; however, in time of wars launched on Korea by both China and Japan, the major works of early Buddhist art and architecture in this region were destroyed. To date, there are several images that have survived and resemble the Wei Chinese stylization. Under the influence of the neighboring T'ang Dynasty in China, historical documents note numerous temples, monasteries, and pagodas built by the rulers and members of the upper class. The figure Maitreya also seems to have become an important Bodhisattva of the region and is featured frequently in statue designs.

The Bulgoksa Temple of Kyongju, built by Prime Minister Kim Taesong in the 8th century, resembles Chinese T'ang style architecture, and was built with an adjoining native stylized stone pagoda. The Bulgoksa temple is marked by the simplicity of Buddhist architecture of this time period. The entrance is marked by a traditional gate, and the temple itself houses a great hall, which contains a large stone statue of Sokka muni (Chinese: Shijia muni, Japanese: Shakiyamuni) the founder of Buddhism and a holy figure.[70] Sokka muni is often depicted or represented in art by the wheel of dharma, footprints, or as Buddha in monk's robes. This temple is one of the last remaining temples that exemplify unified Silla architecture.

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[69] Forman, W. & Barinka, J. (1962). The Art of Ancient Korea. Peter Nevill Ltd., London.
[70] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 27). Thames & Hudson, London.

The Sokurrum Cave, built in the hills above the Bulgoksa temple and around the same time period, is another example of early Buddhist temple architecture. Built in Korea, inside the grotto are fifteen images of Bodhisattvas along with Buddha. Also included are the four heavenly Guardians. The site was constructed as a demonstration of political power. The construction was built as a reproduction of Indian and Chinese Buddhist temples. The structure has an ante chamber and a domed main chamber, a T'ang style Buddha 11 feet high is positioned in the center of the dome. Korean elements include a softening of the facial features. The image is surrounded by 41 figures of Bodhisattvas, deities, guardians, and monks, including Avalokitesvara. Other than the buildings mentioned above, as of yet there are no known Buddhist architectural structures left in China or Korea prior to the T'ang Dynasty. Several items, however, originated in China ." . . bronze temple bells (dotaku), lacquer ceramic boxes and ceramic vessels all used by Buddhist monks and practitioners"[71] became part of the Korean culture at this time.

Transmission of Buddhism to Japan

As demonstrated in the introduction of this essay, Chinese continental materials and ideology made its way to Japan via Korea. These influences not only revolutionized Japanese esthetics and culture, but additionally, as in both China and Korea, served as a powerful unifying force for the region. Bureaucratic structure brought by Confucian hierarchy and its Chinese examination system, classic codes of virtue and ethics were adopted by Japan. More importantly, a new governing policy was adopted into Japanese

[71] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 23). Thames & Hudson, London.

culture, by way of the Taiho Code in approx. 646 to 702 C.E. These philosophies, accompanying the "Great Legal Code," served as a great centralizing force in Japan.[72] Additionally, at this time the Chinese written language in the form of ideograms, pictograms, and phonograms also helped to further unify the region geographically. More importantly, the transmission of Chinese traditional philosophy carried with it Confucian, Tao, and Buddhist orthodoxy.

In 552 C.E., the King of Paekche Korea sent an envoy to Japan in hopes of gaining its support in conquering a neighboring Korean Kingdom. Included in the transmission was Buddhist ideas that had already, in the span of approximately 1000 years, navigated its way from India, China, and Korea, and had undergone geographic transformations that would continue as Buddhism made its way to and through the Japanese landscape. Prior to the introduction of Buddhism, Japanese clans (uji) practiced Shintoism "way of the gods," a form of nature worship with the sun goddess, Amaterasu, the token ancestor of the imperial family as the central or originating kami figure (spirit).[73]

Shintoism was a form of indigenous animism that attributed extraordinary qualities to all living things, including inadament and/or natural objects, such as stones, trees, and mountains. Ritual purification through nature became the means of harmony and cleanliness.[74] While the ancient religion was paramount to early spiritual life of Japanese communities, it did not develop into a systematic religion as Buddhism, and in

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[72] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (p 32). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
[73] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (pp. 13-15). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
[74] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (p. 51). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

effect, it was Japan that benefited from creating the central Japanese nation. Along with a political system, conventions for Buddhist temple structures followed.

Although the technology was imported, the construction of the temples fell to continental builders and architects, who blended the indigenous traditions with thse of Chinese Buddhist conventions. Japanese temple styles can be divided into three subdivisions—Wayo, Daibutsuyo, and Karayo. For the purpose of this paper, the Wayo style, evident at Nara, will be explored.

As mentioned above, Buddhist temples built in Nara, such as the Horyu-ji, Todai-ji, Kofuku-ji, Yakushi-ji, Saidai-ji and Toshodai-ji, were created as monuments of social leadership. Japanese kingdoms believed that erecting such temples protected them from natural calamities. The Indian Stupa for Buddhist prayer and circumambulation was transformed into the Chinese-tiered pagoda, which found its way into the Japanese Buddhist complexes. Each temple typically had at least a kondo or golden hall, lecture hall, sutra refectory, dormitory for the monks, and a pagoda.[75]

Along with Buddhist monasteries and rituals, Buddhist literature and arts flourished during the classic time period. Several popular deities were crafted into bronze or carved into wood, and a Chinese lacquer treatment added for decoration. Beautiful mandalas were crafted and natural Buddhist garden settings were arranged.

Toshodai-ji also marked great Buddhist architectural stylistic changes in Japan. With the rise of innovative sects of Buddhism, a new type of architectural technique emerged.

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[75] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (p. 35). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishing.

The Toshodai-ji Kondo Hall was also infused with a new style of native architecture and is considered the prototype of the Japanese style Wayo. Wayo architecture is seen in the arrangement of the eaves and brackets of the kondo and kodo halls at Toshodai-ji, as well as in the sturdy frame of the buildings. A new method of combining a three-handed bracketing system and slanting struts was established. Additional advances included the use of slanting struts between and the purlins.[76] The techniques employed were considered a step above the methods used in the Yakushi-ji pagoda.

Summary

Understanding the route of cultural transmission is important for a number of reasons. As Buddhism traveled across the Asian continent, it not only transferred new ideas and traditions, but as mentioned above, Buddhism absorbed additional religious and cultural principles. This process is known as religious syncretism. This concept includes the blending of two or more traditions to establish a new and innovative philosophy.[77]

Ideology was transferred, reconstructed, and transformed religious philosophies and cultural materials. China is called the land of "three ways," because of practices in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.[78] All three of these diverse concepts merged with and adapted to Indian Buddhist cultural norms, thus creating an original cultural pattern. This information was then transferred through Korea, where additional indigenous patterns were added and influenced the movement. This Buddhist paradigm was then transmitted to Japan, where it again was combined with indigenous patterns, such as Shintoism.

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[76] Minoru, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (pp. 9-10). John Weatherhill Inc., New York.
[77] Scupin, Raymond (2006). Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective, Sixth Edition. (pp. 390-96). Pearson & Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
[78] Langley, Myrtle (1993). World Religions: A Guide to the Faiths that Shape the World. (p. 36). Lion Publishing, Batavia, Illinois.

During the Nara period, aspects of this new tradition are found in almost all facets of society to include politics, religion, and the arts. The temple at Toshodai-ji and Wayo architecture become a contemporary prototype for this type of phenomenon. New and old elements of religion were synthesized between China and Japan via Korea to create revolutionary technologies and cultural values. Religious ideology serves as the stimulus for constructive interaction between distinct cultures and Buddhism, in affect, served as a catalyst for cultural improvements.

CHAPTER 4: TOSHODAI-JI TEMPLE

Introduction

During the reign of the emperor Kimmei, the Korean kingdom of Paekche presented the emperor with a gilt bronze Buddhist image in an attempt to win Japanese support against the Silla, one of the three Korean kingdoms of this time period. Japanese court families advocated the stance against the Silla, and the Emperor Yomei became a practicing Buddhist just prior to his death, assisting the nation towards the acceptance of Buddhist culture. Over the next several centuries, Japan continued its Buddhist education through continued contact with Korea, as well as China. The domination of Chinese thought and culture in this region was exhibited through innovative advances in philosophy, literature, writing systems, government, and architecture. It was not until the Nara period (710-794 C.E.) in Japan and T'ang (618-907 C.E.) Dynasty in China, however, that Buddhism became a state religion. This was possible through the efforts of a Chinese Buddhist monk Chien-Chen, or better known as Ganjin.[79]

This chapter will discuss the historic significance of the Toshodai-ji Temple, as it relates to Chinese Buddhist influence. Furthermore, it will explore the historic and political atmosphere of Japan at the time of the temple's construction. Ganjin, also will be discussed, as well as the significance of his life in terms of his Buddhist patronage in Japan. Finally, the essay will describe the specific location of the temple's complex.

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[79] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (p. 69). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.

Temple Origins

By the Classic period, the Japanese court became significantly more refined, and heavily influenced by Chinese culture. As mentioned above, emissaries were sent to China and would stay for years, returning to convey ideas and details of Chinese culture and aesthetics. As early as 552 C.E., the Korean kingdom of Paekche sent a Buddhist image and sutras. The Japanese emperor, Kinmei, was initially met with great opposition to the suggestion of Buddhist philosophy and rule by two powerful clans (uji), Nakatomi and Mononbe; however, in time his niece, who assumed leadership, along with the Regent Prince Shotoku, welcomed the Buddhist philosophy. Shotoku became famous for his ." . . generous patronage to Buddhism. . ." By 602 C.E. the courts were based on the Chinese practice of Buddhism and in 645 C.E. the new government . . ." proclaimed the Taika (Great Change) reforms.[80]

In 710 C.E. the capital was established in Nara. With a more advanced bureaucratic structure based on Chinese policy, the capital, called Heijo, became a sophisticated complex temple compound. Structures were built to house officials and promote the power and might of the ruling class, which now advocated Buddhism as the state's religion.

At Nara (710-794 C.E.), architecture flourished and was influenced by the Chinese T'ang stylization and standards. Stable, balanced proportions, with an emphasis on structure over ornamentation, became the norm. Several temples were built in honor of Buddha and local Bodhisattvas.

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[80] Shirokuar, Conrad (1993). A Brief History of Japanese Civilization. (p. 31). Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Fort Worth.

During this time period, Japan was in effect an agricultural and village-based society. Most Japanese lived in pit dwellings, worshipping natural forces and ancestors (kami). Building a capital city, based on the model of a Chinese capital, produced a dramatic separation of Japanese aristocracy from the Japanese population. The Nara capital represented the distinct break of the Japanese aristocracy from their roots in the uji. The construction of expansive temple complexes in the capital city confirmed the great power the aristocracy had over the villagers.

Ganjin: Buddhist Chinese Monk

In 733 C.E., the Japanese Emperor sent to T'ang, China, two monks to seek out the notable Chinese priest Chine-Chen of Lung-hsing-ssu from the coastal province of Kiangsu, just north of the Yangtze River (Figure 2). They invited Chien-Chen, better known as Ganjin, from the Buddhist Ritsu "rules temples" sect to Japan to reorganize Buddhist education. As reported in the scroll of the Tosei Eden in 1298 C.E., after a decade spent crossing the sea with a group of artisans and craftsmen, the T'ang priest reached Japan blind in 753 C.E. and was unable to see Japan's beautiful scenery with his own eyes.[81] Committed to his task, Ganjin began his missionary work at the great temple of Todai-ji for the price of a fief of 250 acres of rice fields.

In an attempt to deepen the Japanese understanding of Buddhist precepts, Ganjin performed ordinations for the emperor, lectured and delivered Buddhist sutras to the Japanese court. Because of failing health, Ganjin decided not to return to China, and in 759

[81] Kidder, Edward J. (1964). Japanese Temples: Sculpture, Paintings, Gardens and Architecture. (pp. 51-56). Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, Tokyo.

C.E. for his continued dedication to Japan, he was endowed an imperial land grant to establish a new abbey. The multiplex of Toshodai-ji was built in his honor for the purpose of providing concentrated Buddhist study to the Japanese people. Imperial support for the structure was supplemented by private donations. These donations often came in the form of complete buildings. The lecture hall arrived from the Heijo Palace, where it had been the East Morning Assembly Hall. Furthermore, the refectories along with the monk's residence were contributions from the head of the Fujiwara family, and Emperor Heozi offered a pagoda in 810 C.E. Regrettably, Ganjin died in 763 C.E. and did not live to see the compound to its completion.[82]

Figure 2. Ganjin (Chien Chen), Portrait Hall, Toshodai-ji, Nara Japan 763 C.E.

[82] Minoru, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (pp. 9-10). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.

Location

The approximate location of the Toshodai-ji Temple complex is situated just north of the Yakushi-ji Temple, and southwest of the capital of Nara found in the Kansai region of Japan, near Kyoto.[83] More specifically ." . . the monastery was built at the block of the 5th street, seven avenue, of the right sector of the Heijo capital, on the sight of the former residence of Prince Nitabe."[84] The temple covered only 4 plots of land, which was small in scale when compared to the 12-15 plots used for other great temples built during this time period.

Summary

The historical and cultural context in which the Toshodai-ji temple was built is significant. Prior to the T'ang Dynasty in China, the countryside was divided in China, with an abundance of immigrants relocating to, and being displaced in Korea and Japan. There was a great power shift among leaders, and the Six Dynasties ruled the region from 317 to 589 C.E. in a state of intense instability. Under the Sui Dynasty, China was again reunited. As a result, the following dynasty, T'ang was able to bring economic and cultural prosperity to the Chinese people.[85]

Mahayana Buddhism became established during the T'ang Dynasty. As the empire expanded its own borders, Buddhism spread swiftly, and brought with it additional cultural materials. In Japan, as an isolated island a prolonged hunting and gathering period, followed

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[83] Jiro, Murata. "The Main Hall of the Toshodai-ji." (pp. 93-99). *Japan Architect*, Feb. 1963
[84] Minoru, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (p. 69). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.
[85] Morton, Scott W. (1995). China: Its History and Culture: Third Edition. (pp. 81-82). McGraw Hill, Inc., New York.

by the agricultural era put the region technologically behind continental advances. Therefore, when Buddhist monks, such as Ganjin, shared Chinese cultural and religious treasures like the Buddhist sutras and crafting techniques, great bounds in social, political, religious, artistic, and scientific technologies were additionally communicated to the Japanese people. These technologies, in turn, operated as building blocks for more advanced transformations in Japan, like the production of Wayo architecture. During the Nara Period, with the adoption of Buddhism by way of Chinese influences, the Japanese ivilization quickly flourished into a sophisticated civilization.

CHAPTER 5: WAYO INNOVATIONS AND TEMPLE STRUCTURES

The Toshodai-ji was considered a second rate monastery when it was built. This temple is of great significance today because it contains prototype examples of Wayo-influenced architecture in its lecture hall (kodo) and image hall (kondo). Wayo, the basic style of Japanese architecture, was concentrated in the Nara prefecture, and consisted of newly acquired T'ang Chinese influences. Accompanied by innovative Japanese techniques, a new form of architecture was created. Structures of the Toshodai-ji complex included a lecture hall (kodo), image hall (kondo), treasure house (hozo), sutra repository (kyozo), sarira house (koro), storehouses (azekura), belfry (shuro), and administrative offices (mandokiro) (Figure 3). Individual structures were placed in order to coexist in harmony.[86] Five of the buildings, namely the Kondo, Kodo, Koro, Hozo, and Kyozo are today designated as National Treasures.

This chapter explores revolutionary architectural designs that occurred as a result of blending Chinese Buddhism and Japanese traditions. Specifically, Wayo elements and the innovation of complex structures employed in the Kondo Hall, or Golden Hall at Toshodai-ji are discussed. These elements include a hidden roof design with a coved lattice ceiling (noki-tenjo), hip roof (sori), complex bracket systems (mitesaki), rainbow beams, double roof system, and owl tails (shibi).

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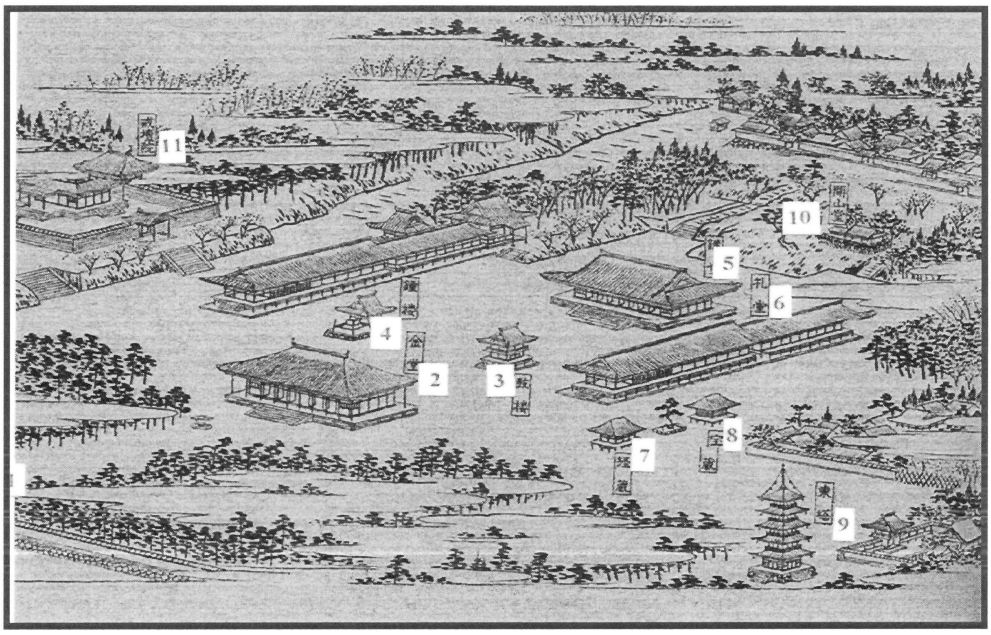
[86] Parent, Mary Neighbor (1983). The Roof IN Japanese Buddhist Architecture. (pp. 101, 108, 110, 144, 167, 171, 207). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.

Figure 3. Toshodai-ji Compound



1. ***Nandaimon (Great South Gate)***
2. ***Kondo (Golden Hall)***
3. ***Koro (Drum Tower)***
4. ***Belfry***
5. ***Kodo (Lecture Hall)***
6. ***Raido (Worship Hall)***
7. ***Sutra Repository***
8. ***Treasure House***
9. ***East Pagoda***
10. ***Kaizando (Founder's Hall)***
11. ***Kaidanin***

Wayo Innovations and Complex Structures

The Toshodai-ji contains prototype examples of Wayo-influenced architecture in its lecture hall (kodo) (Figure 4), and image hall (kondo) (Figure 5). Wayo, the basic style of Japanese architecture, consisted of T'ang Chinese influences and included the application of

Japanese techniques. Elements of Wayo architecture included a large bearing block and bracket arm system tempered in design. Brackets were consolidated into smaller clusters to create a feeling of stability. A hidden roof construction was also developed during this time period, which permitted the installation of a ceiling unrelated to the roof structure. The hidden roof created a greater degree or independence of the exterior roof from the interior roof space (moya). In addition, Wayo structures developed a new type of coffered ceiling or canopy, with a delicately latticed pattern within each coffer. Ceilings were usually quite low, but the inner sanctuary of the kondo raised its pillars, leaving the outer pillars shorter to accommodate three oversized statues placed on platforms. Wayo innovations also introduced advances in framing the roof with a rise in its sloping eaves, defining an incline that was much steeper than that of both earlier and later periods. The clarity, simplicity, and regularity of Wayo architecture was refined in Kyoto, and later imitated throughout Japan.

Structures of the Toshodai-ji complex again included a lecture hall (kodo), image hall (kondo), treasure house (hozo), sutra repository (kyozo), sarira house (koro), storehouses (azekura), belfry (shuro), and administrative offices (mandokiro).

Figure 4. Lecture Hall, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 760 C.E.

Figure 5. Kondo or Image Hall, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

Kondo Architecture and Aesthetics

The kondo or central sanctuary building at Toshodai-ji to date is considered the most Chinese temple in Japan. This "Golden Hall" is thought to be based on the T'ang pagoda, Tzu-en-ssu, carved in stone and built between 701 and 704 C.E. Infused with native architectural features, the kondo is considered a prototype for the Japanese Wayo style (Figure 6). Regarded as a classic example of international structural style, the single story pavilion measures seven bays by four bays, or 92 by 48 feet (with an area of approx. 410.0 m2) (Figure 7). Additional measurements include 27 feet to the eaves and 51 feet to the ridge. The pattern and width in shaku of the central bay are 11:13:15:16:15:13:11.[87] The unequal spacing provides a sense of stability, and is most likely chosen for structural efficiency. Traditional measurements are executed in the Japanese shaku (28 cm).[88]

The hall sits on stone platforms that measure 1.3 meters high. The outside corridor of eight columns supports the eaves and defines the portico. The eight columns across the front taper towards the top, and the column's span gradually reduces from the center outward. Again, the central span measures 16 shaku, while the outer post spans 11 shaku. The unequal spacing provides a sense of stability, and is most likely chosen for the structural integrity.

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[87] Kidder, Edward (1977). Ancient Japan. (p. 147). Phaidon Press, Oxford.
[88] Parent, Mary Neighbor (1983). The Roof in Japanese Buddhist Architecture. (pp. 27-28). John Weatherhill, Inc., N.Y.

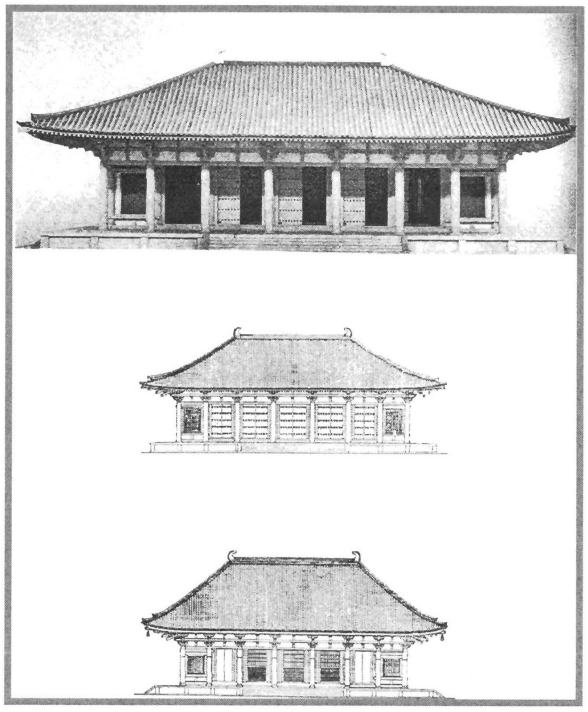

Figure 6. Wayo Architectural Prototype, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 796 C.E.

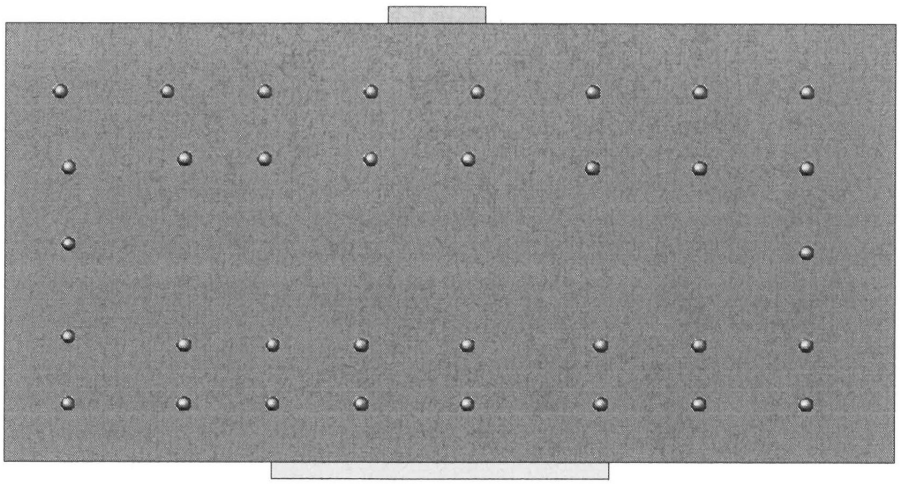

Figure 7. Kondo Hall, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

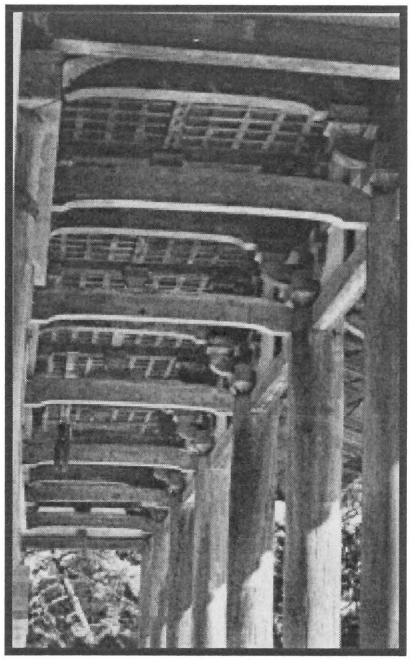

Figure 8. Kondo Hall, Front Colonnade. Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

The upright support for the temple creates an outer structural space, hisashi, while the central space of the building is called the moya. The internal space, 4 bays in depth, 3 wide and one deep, are occupied by a granite platform (sumidan). These supports create two concentric rectangles of columns. In some Nara temples, a third row of pillars, the magobisashi, is added.[89] Pillars are usually lower and attached by tie beams to create a pent roof that is separate,and lays below the main roof.

On the bay front and portico, the façade of the building's doors and windows are set back one bay behind a single row of free standing pillars, leaving the portico exposed (Figure 8). There is relatively no separation of the interior and exterior architectural effects, and the

[89] Parent, Mary Neighbor (1983). The Roof in Japanese Buddhist Architecture. (pp. 27-28). John Weatherhill, Inc., N.Y.

system of columns, wall beams, and bracketing of the kondo are equally visible inside and out. This format allows worshipers to get near the central images of the temple without actually entering the hall. The main entrance emerges at the center of the pillars.

The original doors were plain, flat, and carved of a single cypress slab. The front doors and surrounding grilled windows were originally higher, giving the structure a more upright feeling. The kondo originally had a corridor forming a courtyard in front, but it has not survived.[90] The exterior was formerly painted and decorated with bright colors. The traditional color scheme for the temple included ." . . white dressed clay on the walls, large members treated with red oxide, window lattices painted green, and the roof tiles were gray."[91]

Mitesaki Bracket System

Like the Chinese, Japanese architecture was also based on a post and lintel system ,called masi, and bracket arms or hijiki that extended from the top of the pillars. Along with Wayo influences, the interior bracketing of the Toshodai-ji was modeled on T'ang standards at the height of their strength and consistency. Normally reserved for buildings of first rank, the kondo employed a bracket system composed of three tiers or bracket arms (mitesaki) (Figures 9, 10). By combining this three-handed bracketing system and slanting struts, a highly organized display of power emerged, distinct from earlier temples. A three-headed arm on each column axis, and a smaller inverted "V" halfway between kaerumata or "frog legs" was alternated (Figure 11). This continental design was also found

[90] Sazuki, Kakichi (1971). Early Buddhist Architecture in Japan. (p. 118). Kodansha International, Ltd., Tokyo.
[91] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. Prentice, Inc., and Harry N. Abrahams, Inc. New Jersey.

in the eaves of Chinese rock temples. In most temples of the Nara period, the top surface of the bracket arm that can be seen between the bearing blocks had a slight concave curvature

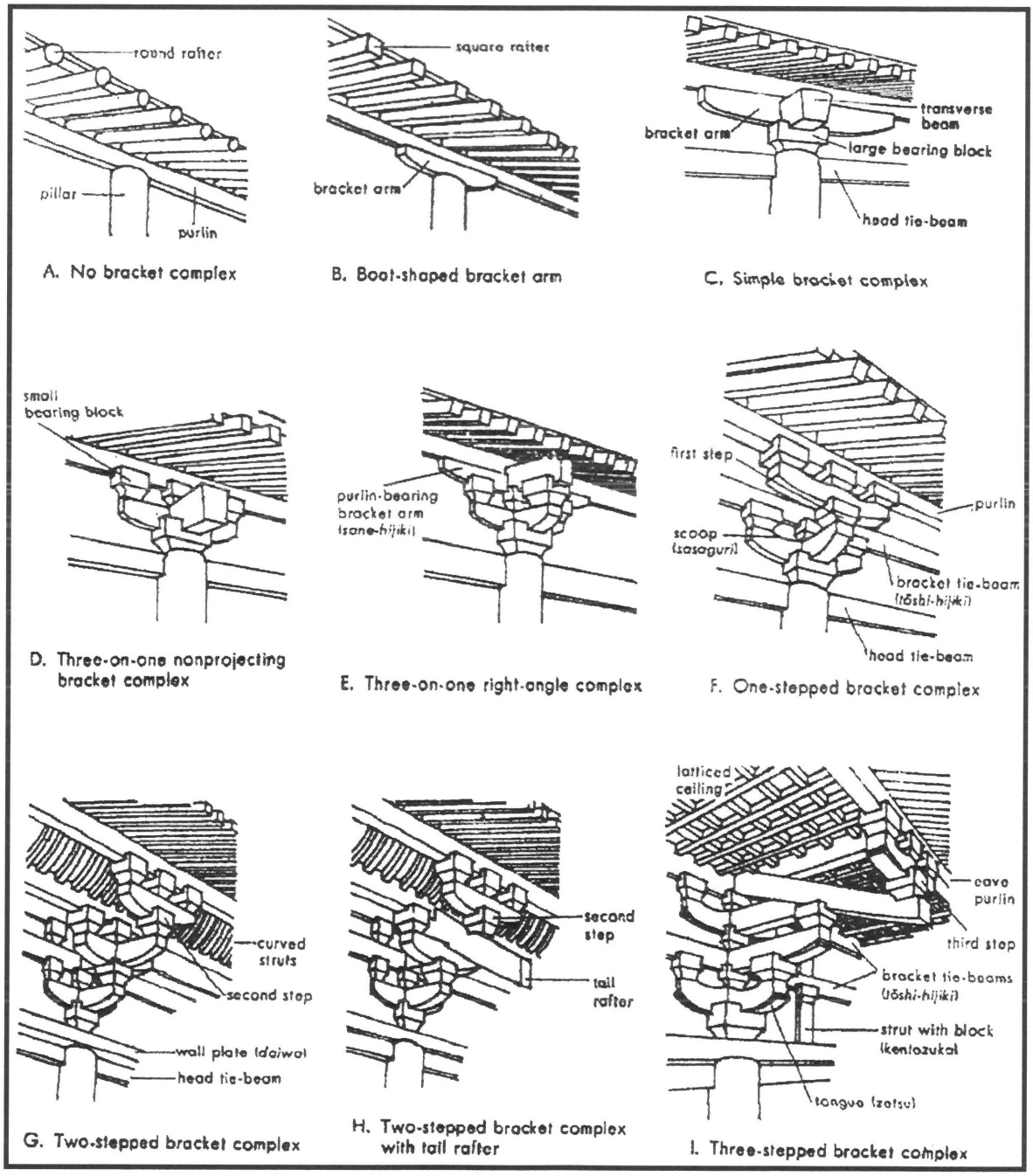

Figure 9. Evolution of Bracketing Complexes.

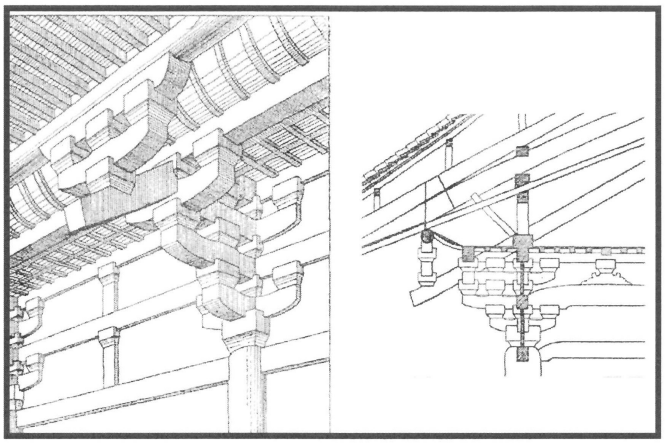

Figure 10. Mitesaki Bracketing Complexes, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan.

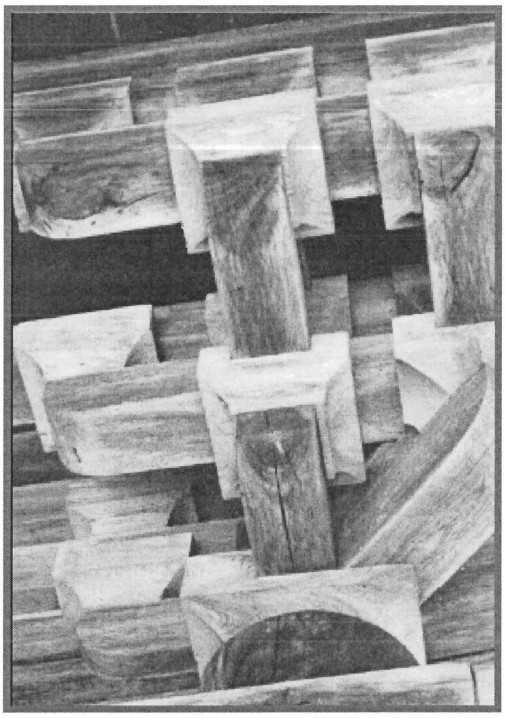

Figure 11. Example of an Early Three Stepped Bracketing System, Nara, Japan.

(sasaguri), giving a bowed appearance. All parts of the bracket system were joined by the tenon and mortise. Across the long kondo façade, the whole bracketing frieze serves as

a visual exercise in clear differentiation and just proportioning. The kondo of Toshodai-ji also possessed a secondary frieze of bracketing under its balconies (Figure 12). Curved eave strut supports (shirengeta) were placed at the second outward step of the bracket system. Furthermore, curved struts (shirin) were placed under the long eaves, and the rafters were very closely spaced.

The greatest difference in Chinese and Japanese bracket systems was the relative compact size of the bracket complex to the framework. The higher brackets, each with two or three bearing blocks, were longer and projected farther outward than the lower ones. Japanese Wayo brackets created a stable feeling of order by consolidating its brackets into smaller clusters.[92] The result was a mature bracketing system, with carefully contrived proportions.

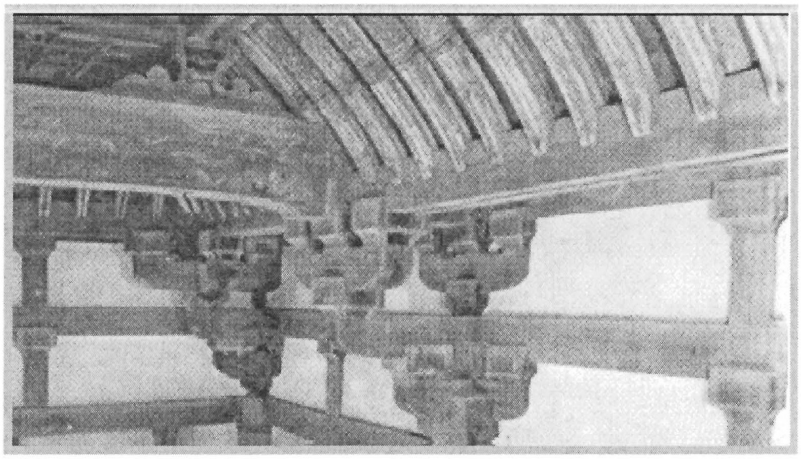

Figure 12. Secondary Bracketing System, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

[92] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (p. 71). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.

Hip Roof

A fundamental example of an overhanging hip roof is that of the Kondo at Toshodai-ji (note Figure 5). Above the double rainbow tie beams and the frog crutch struts in the hisashi and moya, a simple lattice ceiling is connected to a two-stepped bracket complex by curved soffits (Figure 13). These structures support the ceiling and join the bracket systems front and back. Above the ceiling hidden rafters and the supporting framework, characteristic of Wayo architecture are employed at the kondo's hisashi, resulting in a double roof structure.[93] Such a system permits the structure to be roofed at any chosen pitch, independent of the lower part of the building. The new system creates the need for a ceiling to hide the rough structure of the hidden roof. Double beams and struts, along with heavy hip rafters, are used to support the gables, ridge, and roof. In addition, narrower bays are constructed to support the enormous weight of the roof.

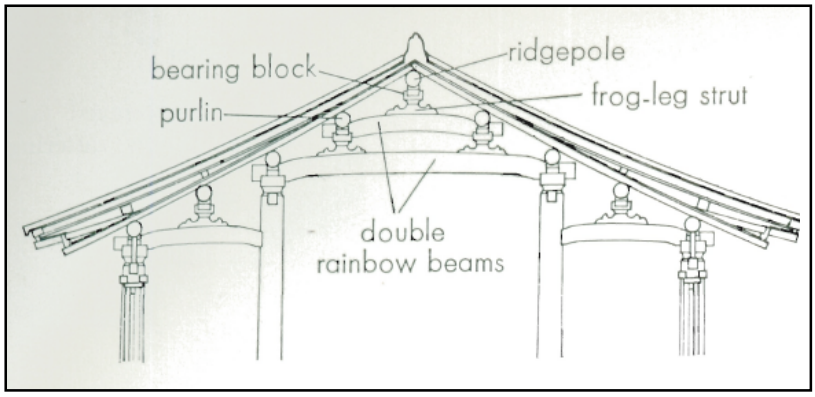

Figure 13. Double Rainbow Beams. Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

[93] Parent, Mary Neighbor (1983). The Roof in Japanese Buddhist Architecture. (pp. 35-42). John Weatherhill, Inc., N.Y.

The bend in the roof is formed where the moya rafters end and the hisashi begins.[94] This bend is filled with clay and set with tiles. While the curve is created on the roof surface, the contour forms one continuous line. The slope of the double eaves (sori) is composed of circular base rafters, square flying rafters, and tail rafters to deliver a delicate and composed beauty to the strong low horizontal roof (Figure 13). A 90-degree corner is constructed by making the corner bays on the front and gable sides 11 shaku and on the bays next to the corners 13 shaku. The two large tile acroterion, that appear at each end of the main ridge, are called shibi or owl tails. These structures are thought to represent a protective dragon's tail. The dragon is regarded as an aquatic animal that could produce rain and prevent fires.[95] This hall is the only known incidence in which the original owl tails remain intact with the structure.[96]

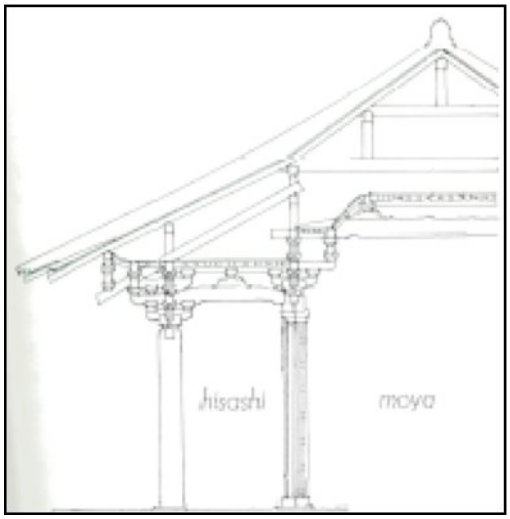

Figure 14. Hisashi and Moya, Nara Temple Construction.

[94] Parent, Mary Neighbor (1983). The Roof in Japanese Buddhist Architecture. (p. 39). John Weatherhill, Inc., N.Y.
[95] Munsterberg, Hugo (1957). The Arts of Japan: An Illustrated History. (p. 38). Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo.
[96] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (p. 71). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.

The roof covering of the temple was composed of gray tiles piled up on the ridge. Round relief tiles with symbolic decorated motifs were set at the edge of the eaves, while semicircular tiles (marugawara) were placed in between the seams of concave tiles (hiragawara). The semicircular tiles were instrumental in initiating the rain to run over the concave tiles. Gaps occurring on the ridge were sealed with tile filler (menogawara). Ogre faced and bird perch tiles were often placed at the ridge ends for ornamentation.

Interior Sanctuary

The floor plan of the main hall consists of an inner sanctuary with corridors to the north, east, and west. The stone platform, on which Buddhist images rest, reaches to the rear of the pillars of the sanctuary. The interior of the stone dais for the Buddhist images occupies three central bays of the moya (Figure 15). The largest open spaces within the building are on the right and the left of the sanctum. The distance between the front doors and the icons is about 2 meters. Again, there is only enough room in the building for the small devotional held by the priest. Larger religious celebrations are held outside. Carved moldings once surrounded the altar on which the images stand. At Toshodai-ji the altar is backed by a screen permitting the ." . . circumambulation but focusing one's attention on a framed frontal view of the images and altar."[97] Decorative flowers, hosage, are thought to have covered the interior at one time. The ceiling above the altar is divided into two levels, connected by a shirin. In the past, the shirin was covered with colorful, painted designs, and appears to have been more ornate than the decorations inside the other temples of that time

[97] Lee, S. (1994). A History of Far Eastern Art: Fifth Edition. (p. 174). Prentice Hall, Inc., and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., N.J.

period. Records suggest the walls were painted with 2,000 Shaka Buddhist images.[98]

Figure 15. Moya, Central Stone Dias of Diabustsu, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

Other modifications in the Toshodai-ji Kondo include the formation of a coved and latticed ceiling (noki-tenjo), that gradually decrease from the center to the periphery of the moya to form a dome shape.[99] The ceiling is organized with criss-crossed wood set together to shape a checkerboard pattern (Figures 16 & 17). Frog crutched board struts rest upon rainbow beams and support the periphery of the ceiling. Bracket complexes, located at the top of the pillars, in turn, support these. The latticed ceiling is installed under the

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[98] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (p. 75). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.
[99] Sazuki, Kakichi (1971). Early Buddhist Architecture of Japan. (p. 90). Kodansha International, Ltd., Tokyo.

eaves to hide the space between the eaves purlin and the long bracket tie beam carried by the second step of the bracket arm and small bearing blocks. The eave purlins act as a transition from the second step of the bracket complex to the third, and also fill in what otherwise would be an unnecessary gap. The grilled walls also create a feeling of brightness. The interior of the kondo has a bright, three-dimensional atmosphere, as light from the exterior lattice windows descends upon the painted plaster walls and images of gleaming gold.

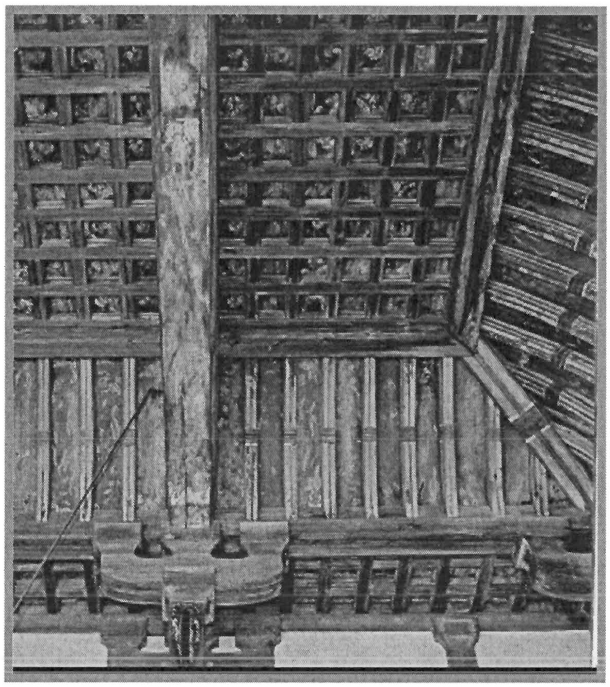

Figure 16. Coved & Lattice Ceiling. Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

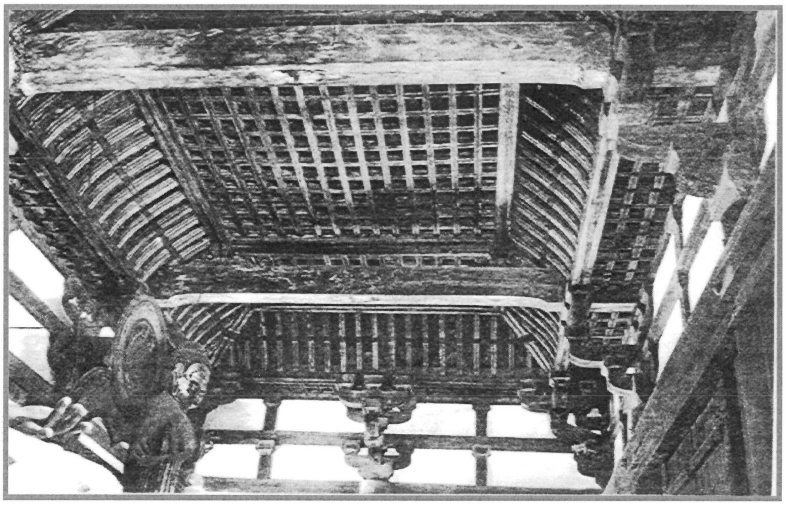

Figure 17. Inner Sanctuary. Latticed Ceiling. Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

Summary

Wayo is a magnificent example of revolutionary architectural techniques, as well as an exceptional model for understanding the concept of syncretism. The study of temple construction, along with detailed elements, permits the reader to perceive and appreciate first hand the results of cultural and religious syncretism. Structures of the Toshodai-ji complex include structures positioned in a layout and having a spatial organization formalized in China and then diffused to Japan.

Additional and new elements include the coffered ceiling, shorter pillars, and new framing techniques, as well as steeper and sloping eaves. The large bearing block and bracket arm system are also modified in design. Brackets are consolidated into smaller clusters into a new bracket system, known as “frog crotch struts.” The importation of foreign ideas leads to a difference in the tiles created, and decoration and ornamentation of surfaces.

Innovative Chinese conventions are blended with the natural elements of Shinto temple construction, and a new standard became the rule for temple construction in Japan.

Most of the Buddhist temples and similar constructions have been destroyed in China, save the few examples mentioned in Chapter 3. Toshodai-ji remains, for contemporary society, an impressive and living example of both Chinese and Japanese Buddhist construction. Toshodai-ji provides a lesson in the exchange of cultural ideas and materials between societies, along with illuminating the shifts in original cultural patterns that can occur in religion, art, and politics in Japan, as they were provided by the Chinese Buddhist influences mentioned throughout this study. These particular changes were voluntary and selective, and work within the general context of the Japanese culture. Anthropologists suggest a blending of cultures is more readily accepted, rather than a number of unfamiliar and foreign ideas infiltrating an area, as in the case of one culture dominating another.

CHAPTER 6: BUDDHIST IMAGERY

Introduction

Chinese and Korean trade resulted in the production of Japanese images that remained close to the continental models; however, by the end of the 8th century, the Japanese began to develop more indigenous forms of sculpture. Japanese forms of individualism became evident in the main forms of worship in the kondo imagery hall. In this chapter, a detailed discussion of Kondo Hall imagery will occur. Buddha Birushana (Vairochana), Senju, The Thousand Armed Kannon, Buddha Yakushi, Bon Ten (Brahma) and Taishaku (Indra), and the Statues of the four Guardian Kings will be explored. Furthermore, the significance of and relevance to syncretism in Nara will be explored through an analysis of this imagery.

Vairochana Diabutsu

In the Kondo Hall, Buddha Birushana (Vairochana) stands at the center of a group of deities. Located to his right is the Bodhisattva known as Senju, the Thousand Armed Kannon, and directly to his left Buddha Yakushi is situated. In addition, and placed directly in front of the Vairochana Buddha, the Bodhisattvas are Bon Ten (Brahma) and Taishaku (Indra). Statues of the four Guardian Kings are positioned at the four daises (Figure 18).

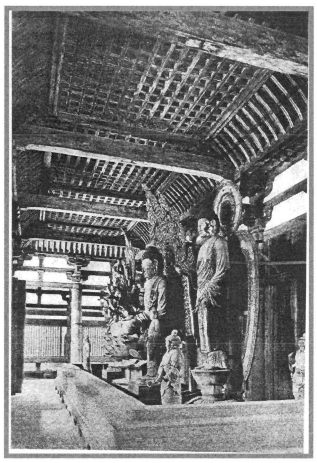

Figure 18. Central Dieties. Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

The choice of images in the temple was culturally significant. During the 8th century, the Shingon School, an esoteric Japanese Buddhist sect, was established in Kukia. At this time, the central Shinto deity of the Japanese Imperial court was the sun goddess Ameratersu. The Shingon sect taught that the major Japanese kamis were manifestations of heavenly Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. As a result, the sun goddess, Amaterasu, became a form of Vairochana. This version of Vairochana was believed to be within all things, and the goal of Shingon was the realization that ones nature was identical to Vairochana, achieved through the contemplation of the Ritsu ritual. The name Vairochana virtually meant "Great Shining One," which translated into Dainichi Nyorai meaning the "Great Sun Buddha." Dainichi Nyorai is thought to be literally everywhere and in everything. Vairochana also affirmed that at the heart of the universe was a mystery, which could be expressed through symbolism and ritual. All other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are thought to be emanations of varying aspects of Vairochana.

The Vairochana Diabutsu is made of dry lacquer and covered with gold leaf. The torso of the Buddha is wood and stands approximately 5'9 inches. The arms of the wood sculpture

are attached separately. The Buddha sits in a yoga position with his hands in a mudra, perched on a high alternately tiered lotus petal base. The lotus flower, that extends the length of his outstretched knees, is geometric with a repetition of scalloped petals that form layers. More typical of the East Asian Buddhas, there is a wide plane of the eyelids that are narrow and half closed. He seems to have a determined face and heavy jowls. Between his eyes is an urna, his eyebrows are slightly arched and the ridge of his nose starts at the forehead. In addition, the Buddha shares the standard three neck rings and elongated earlobes. The shape of his round face and full, smooth neck, and chin averts from earlier Indian forms. However, the down cast eyes show a similar meditative development found in Gandaharan art.[100] Instead of the curvy natural lines of the Gandahara Buddha, the hair of the Vairochana Buddha is composed of a repetitive design made up of counter clockwise snail shell curls. The curvilinear drapery of the Buddha's robes hangs rhythmically over his hunched shoulders. Furthermore, the gown covers both shoulders, while exposing the youthful rounded contours of the chest and upper torso.[101]

Behind Vairochana sets a decorative halo within a larger concentric circle. Smaller oblong palettes filled with small Buddhas are sitting in a lotus pose and with bronze

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[100] Kidder, Edward J. (1964). Japanese Temples: Sculpture, Paintings, Gardens and Architecture. (p. 154). Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, Tokyo.
[101] Kidder, Edward (1981). The Art of Japan. (p. 105). Century Publishing Co. Ltd., London.

flames encircling the borders in turn surround this form. In front of Vairochana Buddha, the Bodhisattvas Bon Ten (Brahma) and Taishaku Ten (Indra) are positioned. In India, Brahma was seen as the lord of all creatures, and Indra was the sky-god and god of war (Figure 19).

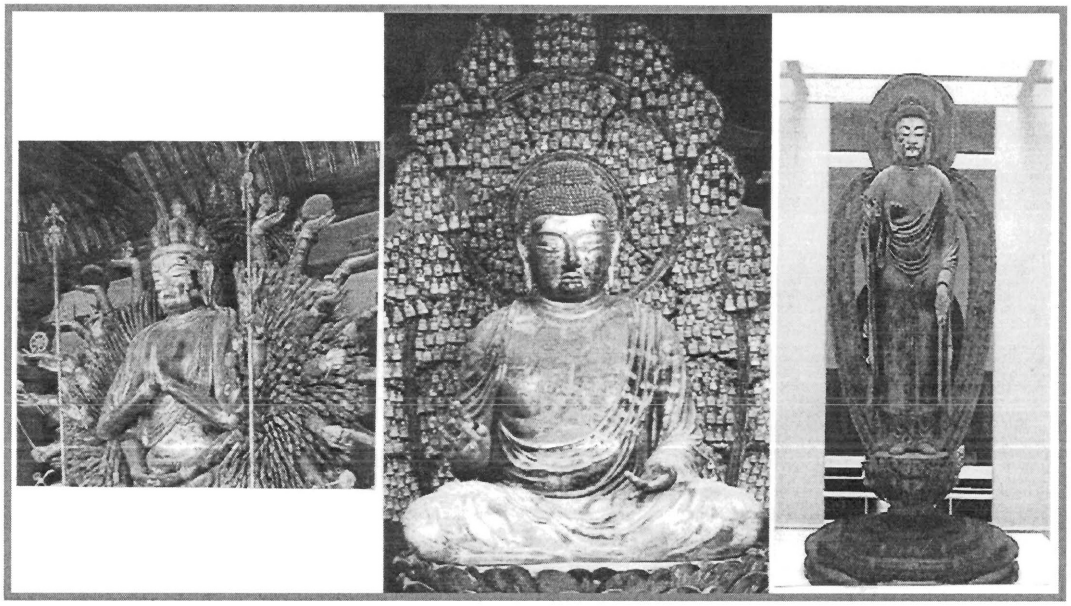

Figure 19. Thousand Armed Kannon, Vairochana Buddha, and Yakusi, Buddha.

Thousand Arm Kannon

The image of the Thousand Arm Kannon sitting to the right of the Vairochana Buddha is a manifestation of Avalokitesavara, the deity of mercy and compassion. Initially, this image was thought to be sexless; however, it became progressively female in China. A popular deity in Nara, believers thought the Thousand Armed Kannon would keep away evil karma and aid those who were sick and suffering. The eyes and arms of the figure symbolize

infinite power, and number of ways Kannon's can rescue suffering beings.[102] The Thousand Armed Kannon is over 18 feet tall and was widely worshipped during the Nara period in 8 forms and in 33 manifestations. The image at Toshodai-ji is the best-known form of the Kannon. The figure is shown with 1000 arms (953 by actual account) and 11 heads. Three groups of arms include 6 normal size wearing gold bangles, thirty-four of secondary size and the remainder as small hands on copper wire. A further 47 have vanished.[103] Like the Vairochana Buddha, long arched eyebrows emphasize the width of the squarish face, and the urn sets below the eyebrows and the upper lip protrudes strongly. The half closed eyes look downward, the earlobes are elongated, and the neck displays three concentric rings. The torso for the figure is only lightly covered with rhythmic and regular folds in the drapery pattern, called hompa shiki (rolling wave pattern), composed of high rounded ridges. The front hands form a charity mudra or hold objects of ritual and protection. Items may include a scepter, flowers, or the wheel of life.[104]

Yakushi Buddha

The image on the other side of the Vairochana Buddha is the Yakushi Buddha, or the Buddha of healing. He is also known as the Buddha of the four cardinal directions. Yakushiias viewed as the eastern counterpart to Amida. A medicine jar or bowl is held in his left palm, and he became associated with the number seven and twelve. The Yakushi made

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[102] Yutaka, Mino (1986). The Great Eastern Temple. (pp. 104-5). Indiana University Press, Chicago.
[103] Kidder, Edward (1981). The Art of Japan. (p. 105). Century Publishing Co. Ltd., London
[104] Yutaka, Mino (1986). The Great Eastern Temple. (p. 103). Indiana University Press, Chicago.

twelve vows to not heal only the spiritual aspects, but the physical suffering of humanity. "One could invoke Yakushi's aid against fire, sword, prison, predation, and illness.[105] His facial features and clothing are in the same style of the Vairochana and Senju Kannon statues. Long narrow eyes, brooding arched eyebrows, elongated earlobes, and protruding lips adds to the severity of the image. Yakushi stands on a two-tiered lotus pedestal in a stiff frontal pose, with his naturalistic robes flowing and his precisely formed hands in a mudra. He shares with the other images the open robe and three concentric rings around the neck. A small decorative hollow disc setting on a larger one frames the figure.

Four Heavenly Kings

Finally, at the four corners of the shrine stand the Four Heavenly Kings, popular deities in Japan and China, who protect against evil from all directions.[106] These images, each carved from a single log, are thought to have great physical power and ferocity. The four images often appear with demons being crushed underfoot. Typically, they are shown colored, patterned, and armed. One of the two images in front, Jikotku-ten, holds a sword and represents the east. The other figure, Dhritarashtra, holds a lance and represents the south. In the background, Komoku-ten, holds a brush and a scroll, and represents the west, along with Tamon-ten, who holds a pagoda and represents the northern quadrant (Figure 20).[107]

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[105] Yutaka, Mino (1986). The Great Eastern Temple. (pp. 104-105). Indiana University Press, Chicago.
[106] Yutaka, Mino (1986). The Great Eastern Temple. (pp. 103-104). Indiana University Press, Chicago.
[107] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 65). Thames & Hudson, London.

Figure 20. Buddhist Imagery, Inner Sanctuary, Toshodai-ji, Nara, Japan, 759 C.E.

Summary

The identities of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas mentioned above are interesting for a number of reasons. The deities with many manifestations become a product of relevant culture, and they are yet another example of religious and cultural syncretism. As Buddhist practices pass throughout Asia, the understanding of the deities and images, and the manner in which they are worshipped also transforms. Vairochana Buddha, the first image, generally known as "the illuminator," or "Great Sun," comes with a complicated history. He is respected throughout the world by different titles with each country adding its own indigenous attributes. For the purpose of this study, those only from China, Korea, and Japan will be identified Palushena (Chinese), Dainichi Birushana (Japanese), and Pirojana (Korean).[108] In Japan, Vairochana is thought of as the Supreme Buddha or the cosmic,

[108] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 35). Thames & Hudson, London.

Buddha,as well as a manifestation of Ameratsu the indigenous Sun Goddess and ruler of Japan.

The other deities mentioned in this chapter undergo similar cultural transformations. Avalokitesvara, known as Guanyin (China), Kannon (Japan), and Kwanum (Korea), was born from a ray of light and is the feminine being of compassion, goddess of mercy, and protector of the world. In China, Korea, and Japan she is ". . . not only seen as a compassionate savior, but also as a mother figure and a bestower of children."[109] She is often depicted holding in her thousand arms various gifts, and items to lead people to enlightenment. This image and understanding of Kannon arrives from China to Japan. The Fukuken Kannon becomes a popular deity and one of the seven manifestations of Avalokitesvara in Japan.[110]

The medicine Bodhisattva or Yakushi, "Healing Teacher," is known as four cardinal directions.[111] This deity is also known as Yaoshi (Chinese), and Yaksa (Korea). Across Asia this deity is depicted to command the 12 warriors. Yakushi made twelve vows to not heal only the spiritual aspects, but heal the physical suffering of humanity. In Japan, specifically, this deity is shown with two guardians, Nikko "Splendor of the Sun," and Gakko, "Splendor of the Moon."

Finally, the four Guardian Kings also known as Ninwang (Chinese), Inwang (Korean) and Ni-O (Japanese) are depicted as compassionate kings, who guard a temple at its four

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[109] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 65). Thames & Hudson, London.
[110] Kobayashi, T. (1975). Nara Buddhist Art, Toshodai-ji. (p. 30). Weatherhill, New York.
[111] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 31). Thames & Hudson, London.

cardinal points. They are thought to ". . . represent the two opposing forces of the Universe.[112] These are gate guardians who safeguard Buddha's Universe. As mentioned above, they protect against evil from all directions and are thought to have great physical power and ferocity. In Japan, the four images often appear crushing demons and holding swords, lance, brush and scroll, and a pagoda.[113] All of these deities personify qualities of an ideal leader, i.e., compassion, strength, military might, protective qualities for children and women, healing powers, and generosity. It becomes apparent why the aristocracy of Japan would idealize, worship, model, and modify these figures within the context of the Japanese court.

[112] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 60). Thames & Hudson, London.
[113] McArthur, Meher (2002). Reading Buddhist Art. (p. 65). Thames & Hudson, London.

CHAPTER 7: DRY LACQUER TECHNIQUE

Introduction

The lacquer technique developed in China, and ornamental lacquered items can be traced back to as early as 300 B.C.E. Not only were a number of such items exported to Japan, but the process flourished throughout the Japanese island. Generally, a lacquered object was made by coating an item with varnish made from the . . . "resin of a rhus vernicifera tree which polymerizes on exposure to air."[114] The resin was heated and then strained, reducing it down to a viscous liquid that is painted onto a wooden surface. The process of the dry lacquer technique was used to construct the main images in the Kondo Hall. This process was one of many brought by Chinese monks and artisans. Japanese carved and unpainted images were exchanged for elaborate lacquered and painted images.

A relatively new technique in Japan, dry lacquer was significant to the direction in and sculpture style of the region. The technique modified sculptures by creating robes and drapery that appeared more fluid. Furthermore, the images were easier to move and handle, and not as prone to bugs.

The process of dry lacquer techniques will be presented in this chapter. In addition, this chapter will discuss relevant images where local Nara artisans this technique. Finally, specific imagery of the Toshodai-ji Temple will be discussed, as well as the impact these new sculptures had on the stylistic development of sculptures in Japan during this time period.

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[114] Smith-Lucie Edward (1984). Dictionary of Art Terms. (p. 110). Thames & Hudson, New York.

Process of Dry Lacquer Technique

The process of dry lacquer technique was used to construct the main images in the Kondo Hall, Vairochana Buddha, Thousand Arm Senju Kannon, and the Buddha Yakushi, as well as the portrait of Ganjin found in the Portrait Hall. In China, the dry lacquer technique involved assembling an approximate form in clay with a wooden core. The form was then covered up with ten layers of hemp and saturated in lacquer from a varnish tree. In Japan a core was also created. However, the lacquer was spread over the form with more moderation in patches. When dry, the hardened cloth was cut and the inside clay was removed, leaving a shell. To brace the figure, horizontal pieces of wood were joined with struts and inserted into the form. Sometimes lacquered cloth was put directly on the bracing structure. A spatula was used to apply the lacquer paste made of powdered incense and sawdust to create features and clothing. Additional lacquer and polishing powder were applied over wire to create fingers and other small details. A layer of black lacquer, decorated with foil and mineral pigments, was used to adorn the surface of the figure. The largest dry lacquer sculpture to date is the life size sculpture of Ganjin found in the Portrait Hall of Toshodai-ji. This figure, with delicately painted eyebrows, mustache, beard stubble and yellow skin, had great influence on Japanese art. The portrait sculpture stimulated the practice of portraiture during the Kamakura period.[115]

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[115] Minuro, Ooka (1973). Temples of Nara and Their Art. (p. 71). John Weatherhill, Inc., New York.

Summary

As early as the Zhou period in China, lacquer techniques were employed in the southern region of China. These methods spread throughout China and, subsequently, to the Far East. The appeal of continental influences on the Japanese court led leaders to employ Chinese monks to share aesthetic traditions like those of the production of lacquer ware.

This is significant for a number of reasons. First, it is yet another example of the influence of Chinese Buddhist tradition on that of the Nara court in Japan. Second and even more so, the statue of Ganjin is one of the most important images preserved. The image is an example of the exchange of Buddhist tradition, Ganjin's patronage of Buddhist arts and doctrine, and is an example of the trade and application of artistic design and technique.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Human culture is built upon the symbols we use and the interpretations we construct of each other, ourselves and our environments. When individuals come into contact with another person, culture, or environment, an exchange of these social constructs occurs. As humans, we distinguish ourselves from other groups, we are often territorial within our social environments as humans, but we cannot help but exchange new and innovative ideas and materials.[116] In turn, competitive and incorporative humans assimilate and synthesize ideas into new adaptive technologies in the quest for a more progressive life.[117]

This chapter will explore syncretism and how it applies to religion, leadership and the arts. As an example of this phenomenon, Wayo and the Temple Toshodai-ji will be further analyzed. Finally, a discussion on cultural exchange and voluntary diffusion will conclude this study.

Syncretism: Religion & Culture

Flexible human strategies can and have occurred in all aspects of global culture to include religious ideologies. Very often indigenous religions absorb additional religious principles and doctrines without giving up their own. This process is known as religious

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[116] Ember, Carol, and Melvin (1976). Anthropology. (p. 30). Prentice Hall, Inc, New Jersey.
[117] Bates, Daniel G. (1998). Human Adaptive Strategies: Ecology, Culture and Politics. (pp. 21-23). Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

syncretism, and includes the blending of two or more traditions to establish a new and innovative philosophy.[118] Typically, it involves the cultural acceptance of a new tradition. However, there can be marginal acceptance, as in the case of the Spanish conquest in Central America, where elements of Catholicism were utilized and accepted, while resistance was maintained towards the Spaniards.[119] Syncretism, in general, seems to ". . . facilitate coexistence and constructive interaction between different cultures," and seems to operate most successfully in "multi-ethnic realms."[120] This transmission, reconstruction, and transformation of religious ideologies is not a new concept.

In East Asia, the indigenous religions and philosophies of Chinese Confucianism, and Taoism, Korean Muism, and Japanese Shintoism all merged with Buddhism to create new forms of the religion. These forms, in turn, affected almost all aspects of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese culture from politics to the arts, to include architectural design and details of its sacred Buddhist temples. The exchange of cultural ideas and materials between societies (i.e., economic, political, religious, social) virtually always leads to considerable shifts in original cultural patterns and paradigms.

As mentioned in the above chapter, human culture is unique in that it is filled with extraordinary diversity. Each culture has its own set of learned beliefs, values and behaviors; however, these customs are also highly adaptive. Religions, such as Buddhism, become a part of a culture for a number of reasons. Most anthropologists agree that religion is

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[118] Scupin, Raymond (2006). Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective, Sixth Edition. (pp. 390-93). Pearson & Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

[119] Carmack, Robert, Gasco, Janine, Gossen, Gary (1996). Legacy of Mesoamerica: History and Culture of a Native American Civilization. (pp. 165-67) Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

[120] Carmack, Robert, Gasco, Janine, Gossen, Gary (1996). Legacy of Mesoamerica: History and Culture of a Native American Civilization. (pp. 169) Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

universal, a social condition that explains unknown phenomena.[121] Religions provide a way to reduce anxiety and a means by which to express or personify the sovereignty, power, sacredness or what is considered profane in social groups and families in society. Religions are also adaptive and malleable for a number of reasons. They adapt to social stressors; for example, when a more dominant culture disrupts a weaker culture. Furthermore, economic pressure can cause changes in religion.

Religions can also serve as revitalizing movements, as in the case in Japan during the Nara period, where it strengthened and unified the country. They can infuse culture with a new life and purpose. This fusion of old and new cultures in a society is known as syncretism, as mentioned above. Syncretism can also assist in shifting political power by repositioning new supernatural and spiritual powers to leadership. As in Japan aristocracy, religion was imbued with a new spiritual life, with a new set of magical, sacred and powerful beliefs. Battles won in Japan, during this time period, became associated with Buddhist leadership. Religious leadership was seen as a transference of power from the spiritual realm to the physical realm.

Religion is also associated and very often influences the arts. The arts are described as a universal expression of "experience and personality"[122] in a person or culture. Variation in artistic style can also be affected during the process of syncretism, as this paper has discovered. Generally, arts must still operate somewhat within the context of a culture for it to be regarded and accepted. This is why a blending of cultures is more readily accepted rather than a number of unfamiliar and foreign ideas all at once.

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[121] Ember, Carol, and Melvin (1976). Anthropology. (p. 443). Prentice Hall, Inc, New Jersey.
[122] Ember, Carol, and Melvin (1976). Anthropology. (p. 30). Prentice Hall, Inc, New Jersey.

Wayo Architecture

Cultural traditions and representations like Wayo are a great example of this type of occurrence. New and old elements of religion are synthesized between China and Japan via Korea. War and migration from China resulted in new technologies, that, in effect, stimulated changes in Japan. The Japanese, having contact with China and Korea, incorporated diffused materials in hopes of a social betterment. China's revolutionary leaps in technologies, such as temple architecture, provided Japan a chance to bypass certain stages of natural development. This occurred in the case of bronze and iron, as well. Both technologies reached the mainland concurrently. The stimulus and diffusion of religious and artistic traits, and knowledge served as a catalyst for innovative forms of architecture that surpassed Chinese technologies and most likely returned to China and Korea, thus affecting their progress. Extensive borrowing from groups that came into contact with one another, as we have seen, is not uncommon. Exchange is typically selective and voluntary, as in Japan. However, sometimes weaker cultures are ". . . obliged to acquire elements from the dominant group."[123] Japan was initially not receptive to Buddhism, but after several years became more so. The result was temple construction that led to the creation of some of Japan's most timeless and treasured structures.

Toshodai-ji Temple: An Example of Syncretism in Religion, Art and, Culture

The monastery of Toshodai-ji successfully demonstrates the Buddhist ideology that was transferred to Japan by China during the Nara time period. Along with Buddhist ideology, innovative advances, particularly in architecture, arrived from the T'ang Dynasty in China

[123] Ember, Carol, and Melvin (1976). Anthropology. (p. 509). Prentice Hall, Inc, New Jersey.

during the Nara period in Japan. The kondo or central sanctuary building at Toshodai-ji to date, readily illustrates these influences. Furthermore, the Toshodai-ji kondo is considered a prototype for the Japanese Wayo style, which combined innovative, but local, Japanese features with Chinese T'ang standards. Again, Wayo features found at the kondo at Toshodai-ji included the overhanging hip roof, hidden rafters which facilitated a double roof structure, shibi or owl tails, the formation of a coved, and latticed ceiling (noki-tenjo) that gradually decreased from the center to the periphery of the moya used to mask the secondary roof.

Forms of Japanese individualism also become evident in the construction of the main figures of worship in the kondo imagery hall. In the center of its moya,, Buddha Birushana (Vairochana), Senju, The Thousand Armed Kannon, Buddha Yakushi, Bon Ten (Brahma), Taishaku (Indra), and the Four Guardian Kings, are positioned. The choice of images in the temple is culturally relevant to the Shingon School, an esoteric Japanese Buddhist sect established in Kukia. While the process of dry lacquer technique is used to construct the main images, it differed from the lacquer process functioning in China. Of the many buildings erected during the Nara period, few remain today. In addition to its T'ang influences, its simplicity of design and emphasis on geometric form is a beautiful example of Wayo influences. Together with its strong horizontal roof and grand construction, it is easy to understand why this Wayo example has become a National Treasure of Japan.

This study was designed to examine the cultural, political, religious and architectural exchange that occurred between China, Korea, and Japan during the Nara era between the dates of 500 and 700 C.E. Furthermore, the study examined the general principles of Buddhism as a foundation for understanding cultural exchange. The aforementioned

concepts were presented and discussed to provide support for the concept of syncretism, and its application. This study conclusively demonstrates that cultural elements not only selectively and voluntarily were diffused between distinct cultures, such as China, Korea, and Japan, but these elements were synthesized and a new sub culture formed with elements from each region. The architectural design at Toshodai-ji serves to confirm and even to this day demonstrates the application of these concepts. In effect, Wayo architecture comes to symbolize something greater than an industrial progression in craftsmanship, but rather a cooperative and collaborative effort between a variation of philosophies, religions, and countries.

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